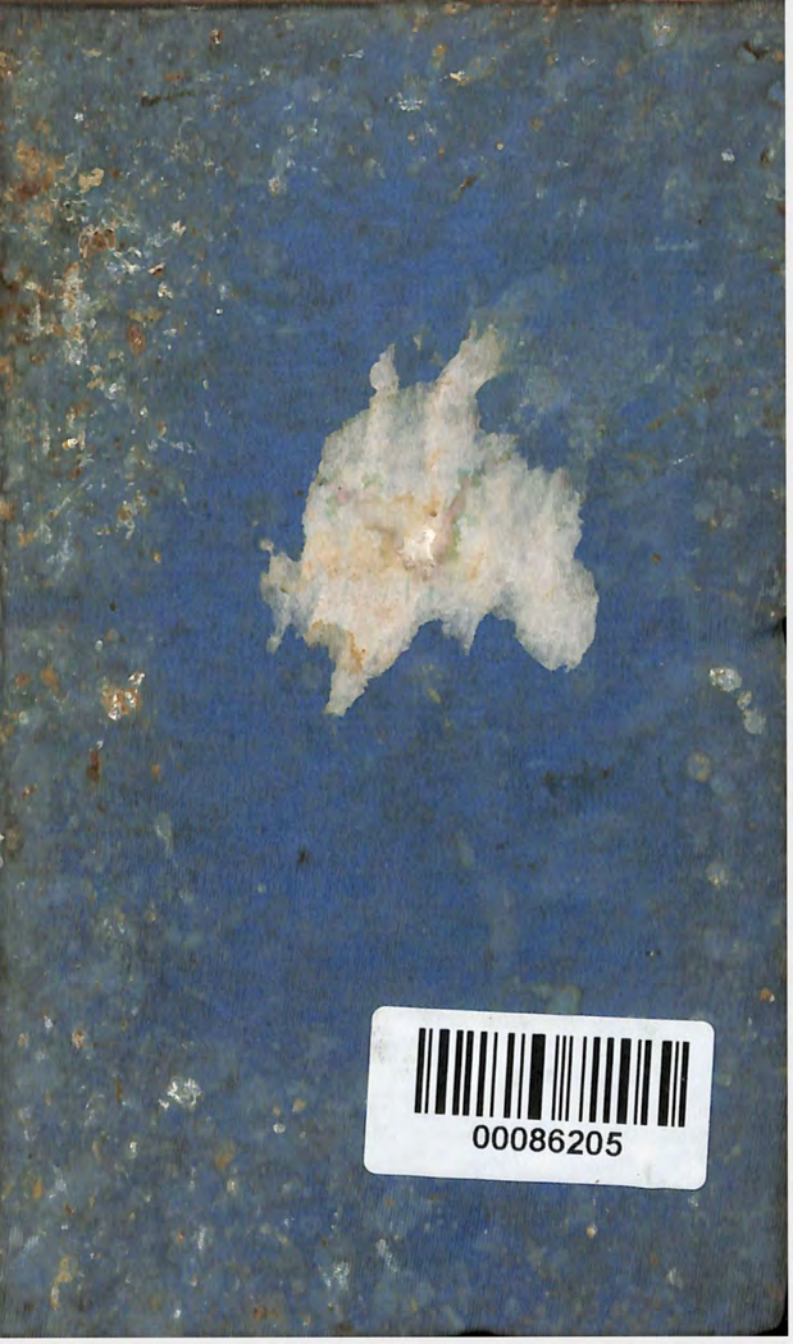
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IMPRESSIONS

OF

ENGLAND.

BY

COUNT EDOUARD DE MELFORT.

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ac

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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IMPRESSIONS

OF

ENGLAND.

LETTER XXVI.

Return to Devonshire.—Home.—Mail Coaches.—Journey commenced.—Mail Coachman.—The Horses.—Rapid Travelling.—Arrival at Exeter.

By virtue of the power which I have reserved to myself of transporting you at will to different times and places, you shall now, if you please, return with me to my journey from Torquay to London, by Portsmouth. It is unnecessary to mention the cause of my undertaking it; therefore I shall only say that, during this short absence, I formed the unfortunate resolution of taking a house in Sussex, at about thirty-five or forty miles from London, in order to be nearer

our family connexions and friends. The term "unfortunate," which I have here applied, will be explained when you read the recital of all that befel us there.

In order to enable you to comprehend me, I must forewarn you that I was now arrived at a time of life when pleasures merely mundane had begun to lose their zest in my estimation. The happy recklessness of early youth, and its constant smile, had given place to other sentiments, which bestowed also their own peculiar happiness. I allude to those of the husband and father, which, in augmenting the interest of life, deprived it of the carelessness, and perhaps of the egotism, in which he, who lives by himself and for himself alone, too often indulges. But, before I go further into this subject, let me relate my return to Devonshire by the mail-coach; taking advantage of the opportunity to depict a little more fully some of the customs of the country.

Amongst the many very expressive words which the English language possesses, there

is one for which I have a particular admiration,—namely, the word "home;" this, in itself, embraces all the ideas arising from "*le chez soi*," — the paternal, or any other roof, where you have left your own family, or whatever is dearest in the world. There, where you are sure of finding her who has promised so sacredly,—as you have promised to her,—"to take you for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness, and in health;" there again, where two charming little girls run joyously out to embrace you; "home" signifies all this, my friend! And England is thus called by the sailor who is seeking a passage through the icebergs of the Atlantic; by the soldier who is panting under the burning Indian sun! Yes, this word is dear to the ear and heart of an Englishman, let him be poor or rich, happy or unhappy; dear even for him to whom this word represents but an abode of poverty!

You will now understand how impatiently I looked forward to my return to Torquay, for there my home contained all that I have just describ-

ed; and I could not choose a quicker manner of transport than that which the mail offered me. This carriage is lighter than the stage-coaches, and is only allowed to carry a very small quantity of baggage; four persons in the inside, and, at the most, two on the outside in front. Its form is, as one might say, "better cut out for racing;" the body smaller, the wheels higher, and the whole of the weight more exactly thrown upon one particular point. It was in the mail-coach to Exeter,—the chief town of the county of Devonshire,—that I had engaged my place; I found it in Piccadilly at the hour indicated. It was just on the point of departure; the whole scene offered a true English picture in its full character.

The four horses, exactly alike, are harnessed and reined up short, the head up, and their coats as shining as their harness; the leaders are held by two grooms, placed at their heads. The coach-box was covered by two or three great-coats; I had secured my place on it, by setting there my old blue cloak,—fallen from

its high estate, when lined with white it used to accompany me to the Opera and Almack's. Besides this, I found one of the great-coats of which I spoke above, and the coachman had himself goodnaturedly prepared to wrap up my legs during the cold of the night. The guard, in his red livery,—the royal livery,—mounted upon his seat in the rear, was occupied in disposing in order the different leather-bags containing the letters to be distributed on the road. On the right hand of his seat, passed through a ring, was the long and light trumpet, whose loud sound is heard from afar all along the road, announcing the approach of the mail. A great number of idlers and amateurs, who are always attracted together on these occasions, were standing in a crowd on the pavement to see the mail set off.

If, my dear Augustus, idle people, or those who have nothing to do but to amuse themselves, lose days — weeks, months, and even years of their lives, — those who are in business, or travelling, never lose a moment; their incessant

activity is incredible. One would almost think that they regret the time passed in sleeping; and I should not be surprised, in a country so fertile in inventions of every kind, to find some day that the bankers' clerks, tradesmen, &c. have discovered a way, during sleep, to continue their accounts so as to find their work finished on the morning when they awake!

But, without joking, and to return to my mail-coach, as well as to the promptitude with which all that relates to travelling is conducted in England: I was scarcely seated on my six square inches of box, without back, or any other support than what is offered by the footboard, when our coachman appeared; and, in much less time than it takes me to tell it, he adjusted his four reins, grasped his whip, and mounted to his seat. I heard his "Good-evening, sir!" —then the sharp whistle: the leaders had freed their heads by a violent motion from the hands which had restrained them, and we were off.

As long as we were in London, or the immediate suburbs, our progress was comparatively

slow, on account of the great number of carriages and people which interrupted it; but the skill of the coachman was only the more apparent in avoiding accidents, and in moderating the ardour of his horses. He was not a tall man, but strong-built; his large chest, his muscular form, his cool and assured countenance, bespoke that he possessed all the qualities necessary to his occupation. On my part, in order to show him I was not quite an ignoramus, I took good care not yet to speak to him. In fact, it would have been rather difficult to make myself heard amidst all the din of the carriages, and the piercing sounds which the guard, with a chest quite as ample as that of his comrade, drew from his horn. Besides, I should have risked diverting his attention from his business, and have passed in his eyes for no better than a cockney. Probably it was this evidence of discretion which gained his favour for the rest of the journey.

It is remarkable how much the generality of these coachmen appear flattered when they

meet with a gentleman who seems to comprehend something of their "duties as coachmen," and can appreciate their skill and experience, understand the responsibility which rests on them, and again particularly when he shows an interest in their horses. Our course, as I told you, was not very rapid until we cleared the suburbs; but, having passed through the last turnpike, no sooner was the road free before us, than the horses displayed their full ardour. I could perceive on the coachman's face a smile of satisfaction at the bounds which they made, and at the rapidity with which the carriage was hurried forward.

"Are they not fine creatures, sir?" said he, beginning himself the conversation; "they are worth a hundred guineas each, sir," added he, whilst lightly passing his whip over their shoulders, and then tempering the too great eagerness of one of his leaders by the words "steady! steady! quiet! quiet!"

In order to give you an idea of the quickness with which we travelled, I must tell you that

the distance from London to Exeter is about one hundred and sixty miles; and, including the stoppages which we were obliged to make for the delivery of the letter-bags, it was performed in twenty hours. During the night, the obscurity, far from proving an obstacle, seemed a reason for greater rapidity. If you will recollect how I was perched upon my corner of the coach-box, without any support than what my feet afforded me, you will not be surprised that, thus seeming to cleave the air like an Antwerp pigeon, the not over-pleasant thought came over me that if we met a cart, which, notwithstanding our lanterns, would never have had time to get out of the way, or a stone even,—why, coach and travellers would have been shattered to atoms!

Affecting an air of tranquillity, which I confess I did not feel, I addressed my friend the coachman, leaning over his shoulder and putting my head close, that he might hear me distinctly:

"I say, coachman! what a tremendous crash if we should meet a stone!"

"There is not such a thing on the road, sir; I know every bit of it."

"But if it were a cart?"

"Too late for a cart now, sir."

And he accompanied these words with a whisking of his whip, which gave so great an impulse to the carriage, that I only thought of keeping my seat, and put aside for the moment all further observation.

Arrived at Exeter, I took a postchaise, (a convenience you find at all the inns where they keep posthorses in England,) and reached my home, there to recommence my preparations for departure.

Adieu! my dear friend; in my next letter I shall broach a different subject, and one for which I have less courage than for any whereon I have hitherto treated.

Yours.

LETTER XXVII.

Our new Residence.— Forebodings. — Paternal Love.— Our House in Sussex.—Insalubrity of the spot.—The Clergyman.

My dear Augustus,

Our new residence, as I have already told you, was in Sussex, at a mile distance from C * *, a pretty village situated upon one of the roads leading from London to Brighton. On our arrival, whether it was regret at having quitted the beautiful scenery of Devonshire, the fatigue of the journey, or perhaps the melancholy impression produced by the solitary aspect of the house, or again, the inquietude recently renewed for the health of our youngest infant, but the moment that her mother descended from

the carriage and was seated in the drawing-room, she could not restrain her tears. These were the only reproach I ever received for the unfortunate choice I had made. But were these tears a sinister presage of the future? one of those vague forebodings which present themselves to the mind? I felt in myself their influence, and all the ideas I had cherished of a peaceable retreat vanished in an instant. In place of the felicitations I had expected, I experienced nothing but regret, without being able to explain to myself the cause.

For you, Augustus, who have decided to pass your life as a bachelor,—you who can never, as you say, submit your hands to the chains of matrimony,—there is one happiness which must ever be unknown, one affection you never can enjoy—that of a father for his child. I speak not of that momentary tenderness experienced by the man of worldly occupations, who can find but one short hour in the day to consecrate to such a feeling, and who adores his children, provided they retire when this period is expired;

neither do I allude to that species of affection where pride or vanity only are engaged, which pleases itself in the display of children richly dressed, whose future position is assured by accumulated wealth, and whose present life is protected by all that luxury can collect.

These are not specimens of the paternal love of which I wish to speak; but of that true and profound affection, in its most ample sense, which can nourish itself unceasingly, and even strengthen its intensity by the least incidents in the existence of the frail being whom you feel so entirely belonging to you, not only as a simple possession, as a fortune, a jewel, but that which God and Nature have confided to you, which the presence of your child always causes you to feel, and which no other good upon earth can replace.

I will add, that the poor little girl, to whom I now allude, became to us more dear on account of the very dangers by which her existence had been menaced. But I will quit for some moments this afflicting subject; to speak of it in

detail is to open a cruel wound, and, moreover, I ought to remember that it is not upon myself but upon England that I am to write. Let us pass then to the description of the place in which we were now situated.

The country is flat, composed of fields and meadows surrounded by hedges, which intercept the view, because they are chiefly formed of trees. There are some woods here and there; but not a roof, not even that of a cottage, is to be seen in the neighbourhood. The lawn is spacious; the gate of entry to the garden, where one arrives by a cross-road, opens at the extremity of a little bridge, thrown over a rippling brook overshaded with elms and lime-trees, whose branches are inhabited by numerous and noisy rooks. The house itself presents two fronts, forming a right angle, and both opening on the lawn. This is separated from the kitchen-garden by a yew hedge, cut in the old fashion, and offering a thick wall of verdure from ten to twelve feet high, and one hundred and twenty long. One of the façades of the house, larger, but less ele-

vated than the other, is covered from its centre with creeping vines, and extends itself towards the fruit-garden.

Behind the house is concealed the cottage of the gardener with his numerous family. He is charged to take care of the pleasure-grounds, the fruits, &c. The interior of the house, its apartments and furniture, are very shabby, as one says in England. It is true, there is a stable for four horses, coach-house for two carriages, and a right of shooting over a tolerable range of country. This must be taken as a sort of confession both for and against the place; but that which will turn the balance entirely against me is the insalubrity of the spot, which results from its low position, and the damp fields which surround it. This had escaped my inexperience when I came to view the premises during the heat of the summer. It is true, that to have apprised me of it would have been more than virtue in *Madame* the proprietor. She had, without doubt, too much desire to let it; but how many pangs and griefs would she per-

haps have spared to me, if a movement of generosity had prompted her to speak!

The first visit which was made to us, and the only one we desired to receive, was that of the clergyman of C * *, the neighbouring village. It would perhaps have appeared to you extraordinary to see him coming upon horseback, in top-boots. You would have deemed this too much like the world, habituated as you are to the severe and rigid habits of the priests of our country. But do not judge too precipitately; observe that in England, amongst gentlemen who live in the country, (and even amongst farmers,) riding on horseback and in this description of boots is a common custom; and, moreover, the great age of the minister could not allow him any longer to make these visits on foot in the environs of his presbytery.

Certainly there is nothing very worldly in this; and if you add the age of seventy years, and his grey hairs, manners full of dignity, a physiognomy beaming with goodness and in-

spiring respect, you will have the portrait of the Reverend Mr. C. But you shall know him better; he must reappear in all the solemnity of his character,—that of the minister of his church.

LETTER XXVIII.

Severe affliction.—Illness of our Child.—Reception at Hampton Court.—The Physician.—Return to Hampton Court.

AUGUSTUS,

IT will relieve me from many painful recollections to pass over in silence a part of the details which preceded the severe affliction with which we were visited in Sussex. All our endeavours to support our courage in the middle of this solitude, to render even our abode there tolerable, were useless and unavailing. The sad effects of the slow disease which destroyed little by little the strength and constitution of our child, were too perceptible and too certain to afford us any room for tranquillity. If, occasionally, the least symptom of amelioration mani-

fested itself in her appearance, then the innocent gaiety, the playfulness of that age, seemed to struggle to return. Alas! it was confined to some feeble essays to imitate the agility and joyful boundings of her sister, who was rejoicing to see her better. Poor child! her joy was a passing smile, which the sad language of her eyes too visibly belied: and I should fear now to retrace in an infant that profound and melancholy expression; a sensibility so deep, so precious; and, above all, such angelic patience under suffering!

All this, my dear Augustus, had but too strongly awakened the idea that she was not born for this world, that God would recall her to himself. But, I repeat, that in spite of our efforts, our cares, and prayers, the disease assumed daily a character more alarming. We decided to change the air, and approach nearer to London, for the purpose of having a more prompt and easy access to the best physicians of the capital. With this view we went to Hampton Court, where some friends from Cheltenham

were established, who awaited our arrival with impatience. It was the family of whom I spoke to you in one of my former letters; that of "the good father in his library," and "the friend so shy in giving his bottle of hock;" that being, so good, so generous, whom misfortune also had smitten in his turn!

If you remember what I said to you of their friendship for us, of the attention and kindness with which they overwhelmed us, you will divine the sympathetic reception which we found at Hampton Court. But I have promised to avoid all details; and there are so many at this moment which would be painful for me to recite, that I shall pursue my principal subject. I must reserve all my force for that.

After a few days' repose for the invalid, we carried her to London, to consult Dr. V. (to whom I had written) on her pitiable state of health, and to hear from his lips whether we could encourage the least hope. When we arrived at his door, and descended from the carriage, I bearing the infant in my arms, her

mother became so pale and trembling, that she had scarcely strength to follow me. We were introduced into the parlour of the doctor, who appeared immediately. Having affectionately pressed both our hands, he fixed his eyes upon our child. There was then a dead silence in the room. The poor creature, on the knees of her nurse, sustained the look of the doctor with the innocent ignorance of her unhappy state. Her mother held her hand upon her eyes. As for me, my heart was beating enough to shake my whole body. I fixed my look upon the physician so as to pierce into his very soul to read the truth, and to know beforehand the sentence we were to receive!

He calmly desired that the shoulders and chest of the child should be uncovered! Here the sensitive nature of a mother could no longer be restrained: the generous shame of the exposure of her infant, reduced to such a point of weakness and decay, entirely overcame her, and she burst into tears!

But enough! enough! for me, as well as for

you, my dear Augustus. We took leave of Dr. V. after having received some encouraging words, and his request that we would write regularly the progress of the disorder; with some directions for our guide, which were listened to with avidity. In an hour more we had returned to Hampton-Court.

Once more adieu!

LETTER XXIX.

Alarm.—Death of our Child.—Incendiaries.—Their Retreat.

After a few weeks passed at Hampton Court, we returned to Sussex,—to that fatal spot, for I cannot call it otherwise. Fashion, before which, I have already told you, everything yields in England, had caused some of our relations to fly from London; others were absent, from different reasons; we had not a friend near us, and our child was dying! After many nights passed by the side of her bed without sleep, without a moment of rest, a cry of alarm one morning at two o'clock caused me to jump from the chair on which

I was seated, my head resting in my hands. It was the cry of a mother at the sight of a fatal and sudden alteration in the features of her child! In seeing it myself, a shudder apprised me that it announced the approach of death; nevertheless, a remnant of hope caused me still to seek for succour. A surgeon of the neighbourhood, to whom we had already applied, was to return at daybreak, but there was now not a minute to lose. My servant neither knowing the country nor the residence of the surgeon, I descended to go in quest of the gardener at his cottage. The night was frightful; it rained in torrents, and the wind roared through the lofty trees about the house. The brave fellow was attached to us: he hesitated not a second; a horse was saddled, and he departed.

Again I stop! Let me draw a veil over a scene too distressing for a father and a mother. At seven in the morning all was over! Our child reposed for ever!

But listen! another scene was preparing for

me! I will tell it you with more courage, for it was as a blessing of Providence, which, in the midst of my despair, and of the burning fever which arose from anguish and fatigue, seemed created to calm my suffering for an instant by a new and sudden emotion.

A few hours after the child had expired, I, was alone, on my knees, praying near the bed of death, and contemplating that face which then resembled that of an angel in its sleep. The solemn silence which the presence of death imposes in every Christian house, reigned profoundly in ours. On a sudden I heard a murmur of voices, which approached from the garden. It was during the time when incendiaries were roaming over the country, burning farms and stacks, and committing everywhere destruction. On lifting one of the curtains, which excluded the light from the chamber of mourning, I perceived about a hundred men armed with pitchforks and sticks, who were opening with violence the garden-gate. A look cast upon my child inspired me with an energy and a

calm extraordinary for the state in which I was: I descended the stairs, and opened the door of the house; they were all there. Whether it was the promptitude of my appearance, or the wretched figure I made, they retired a few steps on seeing me, and I addressed them in these words:

"My friends, there are surely many fathers amongst you. My child is there lying dead. The hand of God has visited my house, and I am sure you will respect it." In thus speaking, I pointed with my finger to the chamber where lay the body of my babe.

In a moment every hat was lifted in token of respect; the greater number advanced to shake hands with me; they then retired in silence, and gently closed the garden-gate.

And I, my friend, returned to pray at the foot of the bed of my departed child, and to thank God for having rendered her, after her death, the protectress of her father and mother.

LETTER XXX.

Benevolent Comforter.—Spiritual Consolation.—Departure.—The Clergyman. — Ramsgate. — French Fishing-boats.—Goodwin Sands. — Furious Gale. — Life-boats. — Intrepid Sailors.—A Wreck.

DEAR AUGUSTUS,

I PROMISED to exhibit the Reverend Mr. C. in all the solemnity of his functions as minister of the church; but you will forgive me if I do not keep my word. In truth, I have not sufficient courage to continue this subject. I will therefore only show him to you as the benevolent comforter who endeavoured to restore strength to my mind, and to lead me to resignation by arguments full of simple piety; at the same time condemning with gentleness the senseless reproaches that I addressed to

Providence, accusing its justice, and blaming its cruelty. How much do I not owe him for the spiritual consolation he offered me during my sad retirement! for his consoling views of the Divine goodness of the Creator! for all his conversations, which fell like balm upon my wounded heart! If ever these letters should fall under his eyes, he will find in them the tribute of my sincere gratitude, for having rendered me, stranger as I was to him, the object of one of the numerous acts of Christian kindness with which his irreproachable life has been filled.

I shall also pass rapidly over all the difficulties which were to be surmounted before we were able to quit our miserable abode. Already its malign influence, or our sick imaginations fancied it so, had begun dangerously to affect our only remaining child, and had seemingly marked her as a second victim; and under this intolerable suffering I addressed our landlady for permission to under-let the house, of course rendering myself responsible. Although it was

to a mother that I addressed my request, yet it was some time before I received a reply, and this from her man of business; which, whilst agreeing to my wish, was filled with such ridiculous and absurd exactions,—such as the necessity I should be under of proving the good character, respectability, almost the *virtues* of the family who might replace me,—that, unable to master my indignation, I returned the letter to the gentleman who had written it. However, not to lengthen unnecessarily this uninteresting history, we shortly afterwards were fortunate enough to find a most honourable *remplaçant*.

Before my departure, I went to the rectory to make my adieus. I found the good clergyman in the garden, holding in his arm his young grandchild: as soon as he saw me, an impulse of delicacy, I have no doubt, made him instantly re-enter the house to place the child in other hands; for a moment afterwards he re-appeared alone, and came forward to receive me. After several turns in the garden,

during which he made me observe again and again his flowers, particularly his bed of tulips, of which he was very proud, we entered the house: his wife was alone in the drawing-room. He asked me to take a family dinner with him; and, my dear Augustus, if you had seen later in the day these two beings, united as they had been for so many years, seated together on the same sofa, you would, like me, have admired the serenity depicted on their countenances, their calmness of demeanour, the confidence and respect they appeared mutually to feel for each other; and he who, just before, had been talking to me in his garden with so much interest, and with so much religious inspiration, about the cruel loss I had lately sustained, now appeared only the simple husband in his own home. He pointed to the dark grey steeple of the old village church, which was seen across the garden, and with a quiet smile he said, "Have I not done well, my dear Mary, to have the branches of the oak thinned, which interrupted

our view? we can now see the steeple so well from here!" And their eyes rested together on the spot, in which was centred all their wishes, all their ambition!

After having heartily shaken hands with him, and received his blessings, and his promise to watch over the tomb of my poor child, I took leave of my reverend old friend.

We departed for Ramsgate, where we had a sister and a brother-in-law, who had kindly invited us to go to them. Ramsgate is one of the ports on the Kentish coast. It is justly celebrated for the great utility and the beauty of its pier, which, advancing far into the sea, gives a secure and a tranquil asylum to vessels which put in in stormy weather; whilst, on the other side of this impenetrable mass of stone-work, the furious waves break violently, but harmlessly.

The scenes that here presented themselves to my observation were all quite new to me. It was pleasing to me to see the arrival of the fishing-boats from France, (generally from

Dunkerque,) and to witness the good fellowship which existed between the French and the Ramsgate sailors. My interest was still greater in watching their departure from the end of the pier. It was generally in the evening after sunset that this took place. The crew of these barks usually consisted of about eight or ten men: their dress was of a thick common cloth, with great boots mounting above their knees, and large broad-brimmed leather hats; all this to protect them from the continual humidity and cold which they had to endure, for it was in the very middle of winter.

I observed one of these boats particularly: it was decked, and two-thirds of the crew had already descended to repose in the hold, in which they are so confined for room as to be obliged all to lie down on the same side closely packed together, and then to turn simultaneously to the other when they wish to change their position. Those who remained on deck were occupied in the management of

the boat, and directed its course towards the mouth of the harbour; there they passed down at my feet: amongst them were some who recognised me; they already knew me as their compatriot, and as such had more than once got a few shillings to add to their potations; so I failed not now to receive their farewell and benediction. Once out of port, their bark appeared so frail, and was so tossed about by the waves, that I could not fail to pity them, as I saw them exposed to all the dangers of a winter's night on a stormy sea; and yet, as they disappeared in the fog and the coming obscurity, I could still hear their cheerful songs and lively cries! The thought of the morrow, when they would embrace their wives and children, animated them, and kept up their courage.

Some miles out at sea, and a little to the left of Ramsgate, are situated the dangerous quicksands called the Goodwin Sands; near one point is placed a vessel without rigging, but strongly fixed with anchors, chains, &c.

Every night a brilliant light is hoisted on it, to warn vessels passing of the danger of approaching it too nearly. Besides this, the port of Ramsgate is supplied with several boats, which are called life-boats; uniting the two qualities of strength and lightness, and formed so as to be able to live in the most tempestuous seas. They are manned by sailors, chosen among the most intrepid; and are always prepared to go out in every kind of weather to the assistance of those who have been wrecked.

Several times we witnessed those violent gales of wind which are so common on that coast in winter; one of them I remember particularly. It began at about noon, and towards evening burst in all its force and grandeur. Cannon was heard several times in the night following, in the direction of the Goodwin Sands; and although faintly distinguishable through the roaring of the tempest, still it was at once detected by the practised ears of the sailors in port. I was unable to resist my

desire of visiting the pier. There the wind blew with such violence that I was several times rudely thrown by it against the parapet. The sea was indeed tremendous, and swelling to a prodigious height. I found the captain of the harbour at his post, with his speaking-trumpet in his hand. (He was an old seaman, who was deaf in consequence of the explosion of a vessel in a celebrated battle.) The port-light shed its brilliant beams just on the group which surrounded him, and particularly on himself as he stood forward on the very edge of the pier. He appeared quite inattentive to the waves which were breaking at his feet, and covering him with foam; his eyes were fixed upon two fishing-boats, which had been overtaken by the storm, and were trying to get into the harbour, the entrance to which is extremely difficult and dangerous in such a moment, on account of its narrowness and its position. They both advanced directed by his trumpet, whose loud sounds almost defied those of the tempest. The first, raised up, just at

the critical moment, by an enormous wave, which entirely filled up the entrance, was thrown as if by miracle into the harbour in safety! The second came, the helmsman seemed to hesitate; a few words were thundered out from the speaking-trumpet, but in vain. She dashed with a violent shock against the massive stones of the side, a few yards beneath us, and the three men who were on board disappeared in the abyss. Two were immediately picked up, but stiff and motionless from the effect of the cold.

And yet, Augustus, it was in the midst of this raging of the elements, in a severe frost, that the life-boats left the port, braving the sea, running mountains high, which seemed ready at each moment to swallow them up! They departed, bearing with them the prayers and good wishes of all the spectators. It was towards the Goodwin Sands, where the light had disappeared, that they directed their course; as it was thence that had proceeded the sound of the guns of distress.

Tell me,—is there in this world anything grander than such intrepidity? A king, in all his pomp and power, surrounded by a *cortége* dazzling with splendour, opening his assembled parliament,—a conqueror, marching at the head of his army, preceded by his prisoners, and covered with laurels, praises, and glory, because he has been instrumental to the destruction of some thousands of his fellow creatures;—are these comparable? Are these morally great, like the simple sailors of whom I tell you?—these who brave peril, fatigue, suffering, death itself,—death of the most horrible kind,—in order to save men who are utter strangers to them!

You will not be surprised to hear me say, that when I had returned home, and was seated comfortably near a good fire, having changed my wet clothes, I could not help feeling that I was little indeed when compared to the brave fellows who were now voluntarily exposing themselves to the frightful tempest that was raging! Where is the egotist who would not have experienced the same feelings?

The next morning we learned that the life-boats had succeeded in reaching the sands, that they had found there the wreck of a vessel which had struck during the storm, and to which were still clinging some miserable wretches half dead with cold and exhaustion; the greater number had perished. They had picked up at sea two bodies, frozen apparently to death; but who, after being extended upon the roof of a baker's oven at Ramsgate, were restored to sensibility.

And their preservers, these true heroes, far from pretending to any glory or praise, were tranquilly occupied in cleaning their boats!

Adieu, my friend! Here is one of the lessons from which I have acquired a little philosophy.

LETTER XXXI.

Ramsgate.—The Sands.—Dover.—The Castle.—Subterraneous Passages.—Means of Defence.—Elizabeth's Pocket-pistol.—Life Guards.

Previously to quitting Ramsgate,—where we remained but a short time,—I should like to show the place to you under less gloomy colours. This town, like all watering-places, is well and abundantly supplied with provisions of every kind; it possesses numerous shops, libraries, hotels, houses to let ready furnished. Public balls and concerts are not the things in which Ramsgate excels; but I speak of them here only by hearsay, as I had no inclination to judge of them by my own experience.

The commerce that exists with the opposite

French coasts is tolerably active, though it does not reach articles of great importance. What appeared to me most remarkable, was the immense quantity of eggs that arrived from France. These are packed in long cases, each of which contains about four thousand; and I once reckoned eighty of them unloaded from one vessel, and ranged along the harbour.

At low water, on the left of Ramsgate pier, is a fine extent of dark grey sand, sheltered by the high cliffs which shut it in. There I often took my little girl, accompanied by her cousins, when the weather was fine, to hunt for shells. The pure and strengthening sea-air had dissipated the langour she had experienced; and the vivacity and happiness natural to her age began to re-appear, though at times, in the middle of her play, she would suddenly stop, and looking around her, as if she was seeking something or some one, her eyes would meet mine. She saw her thought was divined, and she would rush into my arms,

throw hers round my neck, and burst into tears.

Dover is situated to the right of Ramsgate, at the distance of about twenty miles. I had frequently disembarked there, in my various visits to England; but had always passed straight on to London, like most others, knowing nothing of Dover but Wright's very dear hotel. At the epoch of which I speak, I took advantage of my vicinity to pay it a visit, in order to see its fortified castle. Such excursions are made with great facility in England, where quick stage-coaches run in every direction at your service. I remember, when I went to Dover in this way, I was in the inside, with a lady whose exaggerated toilette appeared to me rather inconsistent with the vulgarity of our mode of conveyance. She, however, seemed accustomed to it, and was completely at her ease. Amongst several observations which she did me the honour of addressing to me, was one by which I was very much puzzled: remarking the quick pace at which we were

travelling, she exclaimed, "Beautiful cattle we have in England, sir, in our stages!" From politeness, I assumed the air of comprehending her; but, as I only knew the word "cattle" as signifying oxen, cows, &c. *(bestiaux)*, I could not resist putting my head out of the window, to see if we were really drawn by such animals. If I had been a little more versed in the expressions and manners of the country, I should have known that amongst horse-dealers, coachmen, grooms, and even among certain amateurs of the turf, the word "cattle" is often used when speaking of horses. I should also have been able to guess to what distinguished class my companion belonged, with her ribbons, bows, frills, and flounces.

As to Dover Castle, do not fear that I am going to treat you with a scientific description of the bastions, demi-lines, scarps, batteries, &c., which render it formidable; I will say but a few words, and those few will rather be in accordance with the general sketch which I try to give you of England. The fort there

is situated on the left at a great elevation, and almost perpendicular over the town and the harbour. You reach it by several flights of steps built in brick, or by roads made in zig-zags to lighten the steepness of the ascent, all kept in excellent repair. At the time I visited it, the rifle brigade was on duty there; and their dark-green uniform, short carabines, and black shakos shaded with horse-hair plumes falling over their *visières*, gave a picturesque appearance to the sentinels, who were parading before their respective posts on different points of the heights and fortifications.

I was conducted by my guide, a subaltern of this corps, into the subterraneous passages and caverns, where I saw iron traps prepared in the arched roof to let down behind the enemy who might gain access into these places, and to secure them as rats in a *ratière*. In these roofs also were holes, through which boiling oil, melted lead, or any other destructive matters might be poured; also passages which could be closed almost hermetically,

so that the enemy might be stifled in them by means of smoke or intense heat. In fine, the whole of the pleasing assemblage of the charming means of destruction and defence of other times, added to those of the present, which are not inferior to them in any respect, were complacently pointed out to me. When I came out of these agreeable places, I was shown a tower, the upper part of which is in ruins, where formerly prisoners were confined. The mottoes and verses, still visible on the ancient walls of the prison, express in the olden language the regrets of the lover or the exile for their lost happiness or distant country.

Upon one of the most elevated of the ramparts commanding the ocean, and facing France, my conductors pointed out to my observation a bronze cannon of extraordinary length, ornamented with beautiful work, on a carriage of, I believe, the same metal. They told me that it was a present of the famous Queen Elizabeth; (but on what occasion I do not

recollect;) and that this fine piece is called "Queen Elizabeth's pocket-pistol." The idea that a pistol of this size accorded very well with the gigantic power and despotism of this sovereign made me smile, notwithstanding the gravity and respectful demeanour of the sergeant, who, in presence of such a precious relic, stood with his feet in line, and as if under arms, without moving a muscle of his face.

I will not let this opportunity pass, to remark, that if amongst the British officers there are some who, like those of all other armies, look as if they had killed, or were ready to kill, every one, it is not so, as far as I have seen, with their soldiers. In the various occasions in which I have seen them, I have always found in their demeanour a kind of modest tranquillity and reserve, which is but the more striking from its junction with their indisputable renown for bravery.

I saw once a superb regiment of cavalry in their quarters; it was "The Life Guards." This I owed to the courtesy of Lord H., who

commanded them, and to some of the other officers, who accompanied me. There also I found the same contrast; and in this case their modest countenances were also more remarkable, as they were joined to powerful frames, and statures so tall, that I, with my six English feet, (of which I am not a little proud, be it said in parenthesis,) was obliged to raise my head to look at their faces when I spoke to them.

Good-b'ye for to-day!

LETTER XXXII.

Tunbridge Wells.—Picturesque Road.—Heath and Furze.—Eridge Castle.—Bayham Abbey.—Buckhurst.—Penshurst.—A Relic.

I AM now going to carry you, my dear Augustus, to Tunbridge Wells, at the risk of your taking me for the wandering Jew. This is one of the prettiest places in England. Its distance from London is about thirty-five miles. The road is bordered by houses of every description, by gardens and villages. Sometimes it winds between two parks, edged on each side by magnificent trees whose branches almost meet across it. On gaining the heights which immediately precede Tunbridge Wells, the town is seen at the bottom of a deep valley,

the hill on the left is thickly covered with houses, and its top crowned by a grove of handsome trees, whose thick foliage adds greatly to the beauty of the neighbourhood.

The road, at the point I have indicated, is divided into two branches: one continues along the top of the hill to the right, passing in front of many houses of very good mien; the other descends, following the winding of the valley into the town. The whole of the steep hill on the right, facing the town, is covered with high furze, intersected with pretty gravel walks. At the time we arrived, it was adorned with its brilliant yellow flower in full bloom, looking like a golden covering spread over the declivity. Here and there, rocks partly covered with moss elevated their purplish heads above the heath; sometimes it was broken by the roof or chimney of cottages. This plant is justly considered as one of the prettiest ornaments of England; it is found generally on the commons, and it abounds plentifully in the counties of Cumberland and

Westmoreland, where are situated those celebrated and magnificent scenes of woods, lakes, and mountains. There are several kinds of it; its generic name is *heath*, the yellow sort is called *furze*. In Scotland, where this plant is found in abundance on the hills and on that plains, it is called *heather* and *broom*, and is often mentioned in the pastoral poetry of that nation: witness the songs of Scott, Burns, Cunningham, and others.

We had passed not long before through the town of Tunbridge; the addition of that word "Wells" will have already induced you to suppose that the place of which I am speaking possesses a mineral spring, and that it is frequented on this account. You know with what facility a family establishes itself in such places; so, after a day passed at the Sussex Hotel, we were settled in a very comfortable abode. Summer attracts many visitors to Tunbridge Wells; at least, many in proportion to its size, particularly during the session of Parliament. The arrival of a few noble peers—Irish prin-

cipally, who, having no seats in England, find this place convenient—causes the rents of the houses to increase, sometimes to the sum of fifteen or eighteen guineas per week; I speak of the best houses.

Tunbridge Wells is one of the oldest places of public resort in England. It was frequented by Charles the Second and his court, and was a favourite place of retirement of his wife. Tunbridge Wells presents an assemblage of everything to attract visitors; at least, such as can exist during a few months without dancing or dining out every day, and who know how to enjoy a lovely country, and drive, ride, and walk, either to sketch views, or to admire seats celebrated for their beauty, antiquity, or historical recollections, of which many are situated at a short distance from this little town, and form a circle round it.

On one side, about two miles and a half distant, is the splendid park of Lord Abergavenny, — Eridge Castle, — with its lakes, its heights covered with thick masses of trees, and its

undulating grounds. From the top of the common at the Wells, where the view is most extensive, you see the beams of the setting sun reflected brilliantly from the gilded vanes on the top of the castle, whilst all the rest of the building is hidden underneath the green curtain which the large trees form round it.

Some few miles further off is Bayham Abbey, — belonging to the Marquess of Camden, — a monkish retreat of old time. Of this, nothing remains but ruins, near which the residence of Lord Camden has been erected; but the former are preserved with such religious care, that they do honour to the taste of the proprietor. Portions of light and elegant columns, the form of the old refectory still marked by the mouldering walls, and still preserving exquisitely sculptured windows, the remains of a tower,—all these different pieces, which ages have not yet been able entirely to destroy, are overgrown and surrounded with young and vigorous ivy, with the flowering clematis, with wild rose-bushes, which often finding no further

support from the ruin, fall in festoons, intermingling their flowers between the arches. Not one stone—not a vestige of decay remains on the closely-mown grass which encompasses these beautiful relics, and which really resembles a velvet carpet, on which one might almost fancy they had been carefully placed! The whole of the pleasure-grounds, in which these ruins are situated, is kept up with the same exquisite care.

In another direction is Buckhurst,—a country seat of Lord Delaware,—placed on an elevation: you arrive by a winding road, which ascends through a grove of trees of great extent, and in which each tree offers a magnificent study. The house is surrounded with a parterre of flowers, and a lawn in front. The hill is prolonged horizontally, offering to the eye one of the ancient *laissez-courres* formed by a quadruple row of trees at each of its sides; on the opposite side of the grove, the ground re-descends in a verdant park. This property is renowned for the grandeur and age of its trees.

I do not know how many other seats I could mention which are to be seen in this neighbourhood. It is true I have chosen the most remarkable to present to you: not that they, or such as they, exclusively demonstrate the general richness of the country; for, in my humble opinion, this is shown still more strikingly in England in the farms and simple country-houses, each having, in proportion, the same comforts, the same niceness, and evincing the same care in the inhabitants to repair any accidental damages.

I will now terminate my description with Penshurst, one of the most remarkable edifices as an ancient place among them. This is an hereditary property of the old family of Sydneys and Percys, — now in possession of Sir Philip Sydney, who is married to one of the present King's daughters. Although vast, and of a noble appearance, this place is more interesting from its antiquity, and from the historical recollections and fame of some of the ancestors of the present proprietor, than from

its situation, or from the park which surrounds it.

Above the door of entry, placed in a portion of the *façade* which appears more ancient than the rest, is an inscription engraved on stone, surmounted by the arms of the family, proclaiming the royal patent by which Edward the Sixth, I think, invested one of the ancestors of the Sydneys with the domain of Penshurst, all its rights, appurtenances, &c.

We saw, in a suite of apartments of ancient splendour, some pictures of great beauty; amongst them a Lucretia, and a Saint Barbara, (martyr,) carrying her own eyes in a plate: also portraits of the famous Algernon Sydney, the patriot, — and of Sir Philip, the author of the Arcadia, "with his fine and speaking countenance." At last, when we were coming out of the old hall, the housekeeper pointed out to us, hanging against the walls, the enormous antlers of a stag, preserved for more than

a century, in remembrance of the death of a poor woman, which was occasioned in the park by the fury of the animal to which they belonged.

Adieu !

LETTER XXXIII.

Rural Pleasures.—Ball-rooms.—The Promenade.—Acts of Charity.—Charity-children at dinner.—Exclusives.—Curious Custom.—English Women.—Tiresome Conversations.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS is not, like Cheltenham, a place completely dedicated to gaiety; it is far from offering the same chances to those gentlemen who are rather desirous or "obliged" to get married, or to those who, as I said before, only live by parties with refreshments, or invitations to dinner. Tunbridge Wells is much more simple, much more rural; its pleasures are sought and found in country excursions. Asses (biped as well as quadruped) are to be seen everywhere; but those which are found here have this peculiarity, that they

are always saddled and bridled, and ready for the ladies to mount for their daily amusement or exercise; whether it be to go four or five miles to admire a view, a ruin, or a country seat, or whether it be a mile and a half only, to eat strawberries and cream in the garden belonging to the little cottage on Rusthall Common, where this fruit is found in as great perfection as the imagination of the utmost epicure can conceive.

At Tunbridge Wells they dance, it is true,—for where do they not dance?—but it is only about once a fortnight, and that during the season only. There is here, as in all these public places, a "master of ceremonies;" but this one has so little to do, that he finds time most evenings to enjoy his game of whist very quietly. If the ball-rooms are frequented by little company, at least one has the enjoyment of breathing freely, and listening in comfort to the music of an excellent band (part of Weippert's, I believe); and, what is still more agreeable, these same musicians repeat three

times a day a number of pretty airs on the promenade which is close to the mineral spring. This promenade is merely a wide pavement of stones, of not more than four hundred paces in length, bordered on one side by a wooden gallery, under which are the principal shops, the libraries, the ball-rooms, &c.; and on the other by a double row of trees, through which is seen the fashionable Sussex Hotel.

By-the-bye, did you ever hear before of an innkeeper in a small town, who gave from one hundred and twenty to one hundred and thirty pounds per annum for a right of shooting? And here I must add, that at Tunbridge Wells every one, even to the linen-draper, is a sportsman; and the landlord of the Sussex Hotel finds in it a double advantage, himself having the pleasure of killing the hares and birds that he afterwards puts upon table before the visitors to his hotel.

You may find in this place abundant proofs of the truth of what I have asserted respecting the beneficence of the wealthy, or of the

middling classes in England, towards the poor and infirm. I do not think the principal families residing at Tunbridge Wells exceed fifty; yet, although none of them are extremely rich, their assistance seems to suffice for the support of the indigent, who appeared to me to be in greater proportion there than in most other places I have visited. This is done, as I have before told you, by subscription, or by particular acts of charity, and continued by distribution of food, clothing, medicine, blankets, &c. You may at this very time see there a young clergyman, (the Rev. Mr. P., brother-in-law of the celebrated Archbishop of Dublin), sometimes directing in person the studies of a large number of boys — the children of poor parents. This school has been founded by the same generous spirit; it is maintained by voluntary subscription, and is under his superintendence. The scholars are instructed in their Christian duties, and receive elementary notions useful in their after-life.

I saw this young clergyman preside at a dinner that he gave himself to the charity-children: he was standing at the head of a long narrow table in their simple school-room, and was occupied in carving an enormous piece of roast beef, followed by a huge pudding; his task was by no means a slight one, for the appetites of his young guests were not easily satisfied. The pleasure, however, depicted in his countenance, proved that he was amply recompensed for the trouble he was so kindly taking.

My little girl was one of those who waited on these poor children during their happy dinner. A general examination had taken place some hours previously, which evidently proved the social utility of such an establishment.

Notwithstanding all this, do not imagine, my dear Augustus, that all is perfection at Tunbridge Wells; for here are comprised certain persons who, perhaps carrying a little too far their ideas of religion, become a kind of spiritual exclusives. Here also, although in

so small a community, a higher rank, a rather larger fortune, or better connexions, establish invidious distinctions. From this, some curious peculiarities result as to the polite duties of society. I will give you an example. I was walking one day upon the common, or rather upon the road which runs along the top of it, called Mount Ephraim, composed of a succession of pretty houses surrounded with gardens: this may be called the aristocratical part of Tunbridge Wells: on passing before the habitation of a lady, who may be considered in herself as the *élite* of this society, —who had been absent, and of whose return I was ignorant,—I saw two ladies coming out of her gate; I bowed to them, and continued my walk; upon which they both cried out to me, "What! are you not going to call on Mrs. T.?—she arrived yesterday!" I excused myself on the grounds that the slight intimacy I had with this lady did not warrant so marked an *empressement*, and repeating my bow, I walked on, leaving them, I believe,

in astonishment at my temerity or my indifference.

Another custom at Tunbridge Wells appeared to me peculiar to this place; it is that of inviting the gentlemen to dinner, and their wives to tea on the same evening. I will not stop here to seek for the reason of this oddity, as by not doing so I shall avoid perhaps some domestic details which it is better to respect and to leave unremarked: but this subject, considered more generally, may serve me as a theme upon which to add a few words; it is one which cannot fail to excite the observation of every foreigner sojourning in England,—I mean the false position in society in which women are placed.

As to that of the lady of Tunbridge Wells, who, alone at dinner with ten men, quits her own table without having taken any part in a conversation which has lasted two hours, but ascends into the drawing-room to receive their ten wives, and wait with them the expiration of another hour, which these gentlemen will pass in

drinking a few more bottles of wine, and in finishing their political or agricultural discussions,—you will agree with me, that for her the question is decided.

But in considering this subject on a more enlarged scale, I think I may say that, notwithstanding the high respect which every Englishman professes to feel for women in general, and for their own wives in particular, they are not the less excluded from the pleasures in which the men indulge. The general basis of all their conversations is politics, and why do not these ladies take part in this? Is it want of intelligence? Is it want of ability? Not at all. I am induced to think that the women are better informed than the generality of the men. Why then do they not more often enter into general conversation? — Englishmen say that it is from modesty; but would it be injurious to this modesty to impart a new idea, or to combat one already announced? to interest by wit when perhaps profound knowledge or experience may be wanting? to soften, by their participation,

the dryness observable in all conversations in which men alone sustain a part? or to correct the too decisive tone in which, in spite of their courtesy, they so often declare opinions? Would not this be a great social advantage?

Why should a woman of birth, of education, for it matters not what is her rank if she possess the latter qualification,—why should she not declare unhesitatingly her opinions upon religion, upon the arts, upon literature, upon the theatres? And how even does it affect her modesty to speak of war, glory, of military triumphs or reverses? In my opinion, she would only please the more; and, if she were beautiful, would inspire her listeners with still greater bravery.

May not this reserve explain the useless and incessant running after pleasure, so prevalent in English society? the continual but vain efforts to find amusement? I will add, that with the least experience, it is impossible to dispute that women are, and must be, the soul of society, the principal spring upon which all its pleasures and resources depend; and that the wit or infor-

mation that a woman may be able to exhibit, can in no way cast a shade over her modesty.

So, my dear Augustus, as all great reforms have small beginnings, I beg you will recommend the Englishmen of your acquaintance to keep for themselves, if they particularly wish it, all the dry subjects of conversation, such as law-questions, and the tiresome subject of political economy, &c. I assure you, English society would be much the gainer by it.

Adieu!

LETTER XXXIV.

Summer Hill.—Magnificent View.—Library at Summer Hill.—A Rencontre.—Vagabonds.

Among the residences in the neighbourhood of Tunbridge Wells, is one which I have reserved in order to consecrate to it an entire page; for of this I retain a grateful remembrance, having there received much hospitality from its amiable proprietors. I allude to Summer Hill, where Charles the Second, *de joyeuse mémoire*, held his gay court, and whence the Chevalier Hamilton drew, in great part, the materials for his clever and amusing *Mémoires du Comte de Grammont*.

The present possessor has altered and greatly

embellished the interior, but has carefully avoided any change in the exterior of this ancient seat. The bluish grey colour of the walls, the formation, the whole *ensemble* of the edifice, which is built on a considerable elevation, recalls former days forcibly to the mind. The age of the trees of the park are a further attestation of its antiquity.

One of the peculiar advantages enjoyed here, is the magnificent view from the window of the great saloon on the first floor, comprising the whole width of the building. This window is, in form and size, like a handsome church-window, and opens on an antique stone balcony; it commands an immense extent of country, which, first falling in a gentle descent for the space of two or three miles, afterwards rises gradually until it joins the heights which form the horizon at the distance of twenty or twenty-five miles.

The whole of this space presents a succession of masses of trees closely approaching each other, and thus giving the effect of long lines of verdure, dark or bright according to their

nature, or to the rays of light falling on them, but diminishing in tone and strength as the distance gives them its own vaporous grey tint. Towards the left, upon the side of a hill, is seen the village church of which Grammont speaks so tenderly; and it would appear as if the trees made an opening of themselves in this direction, to allow the eye to catch the view of its white steeple.

A remarkable and valuable improvement has been made at Summer Hill, in the newly-constructed library, which I should think is more than a hundred feet in length. The walls are of carved wood, polished, and of a light colour, which prevents the usually melancholy appearance of this kind of apartment in all ancient dwellings. It is, in form, like a wide gallery, composed of several divisions, only separated by elevated arches; and each window, opening to the ground and upon the garden, becomes, from the thickness of the exterior walls, a furnished cabinet. The choice, the beauty, and the profusion of works of every description,

which are here collected together, give evident proofs of the taste and discrimination of the proprietor.

When I contemplated the general comfort which reigned throughout this retreat, its complete tranquillity, its numerous well-cushioned sofas, its lounging easy-chairs, the thick Turkey carpet on which I walked, also the treasures of history, science, and art, which it contains,—I asked myself, "What more can be desired in this world?" What exhaustless resources to him who could thus pass hours in peaceful retirement, instructing, strengthening, enlarging his mind!

I remember one day, when I was looking over several English works, I chanced to take up one which I found was a criticism on the philosophy of Diderot, J. J. Rousseau, Voltaire, &c., put in parallel with the morality they taught and practised. I have never seen a greater power of sarcasm; the author must have had access to many proofs of the peculiarities in the lives of these men, for their

letters are cited, the evidence is complete, and the lash, (if I may so express myself,) which he inflicts upon such pernicious opinions, appears to me well and vigorously applied.

After one of my visits to Summer Hill, as I was returning on foot to Tunbridge Wells, I took a path which led through a wood of about a mile and a half in length. During my progress I perceived an ill-looking fellow standing right in the middle of the path I was following, his arms crossed on his breast; as I advanced, I saw another, half concealed by the bushes, leaning against a tree with his hands behind him. I immediately recollected that by good luck I had taken my sword-stick, although I determined not to use it except in the greatest extremity. I continued to advance, without seeming to have any suspicion. When I arrived within a few feet of the one who looked as if he intended to prevent my passing, the fellow, without moving a single inch, said:

"Please, sir, will you tell me what o'clock it is?"

I stopped, and, drawing "my steel" half out, answered:

"My good fellow, is it really the hour you wish to know, or is it my watch that you want? This is not a place to ask such a question, and I recommend you for your own sake to get out of my way."

Thus speaking, I walked close up to him, pulling my blade out an inch or more at each step; he moved a little on one side, and I passed, fixing my eyes firmly on his. If I read in his countenance an expression of annoyance, I gave all the credit to my cane. I turned half a minute afterwards to look for the men, but they had both disappeared.

I am far from thinking that these two men would have attempted my life; I do not even suppose that they would have used violence in robbing me; yet, the solitary situation where I met them, the attitude they had assumed, and particularly their wretched appearance, sufficed to put me on my guard. Besides, what explained this adventure better

than anything else, was the fact that for the last three days there had been races at Tunbridge Wells, which, like all such meetings, had attracted as many vagabonds and rascals as respectable company.

Adieu !

LETTER XXXV.

Sporting Invitation.—Melancholy Accident.—"Genteel People."— A Country Villa.—Shooting Parties.—Newmarket Races.—The Course.—The Betting Post.- The Company.—The Race.

Now you must again put on your travelling-cap, for I am going to transport you into Cambridgeshire. The accident which had happened to me in Wales, had in no wise diminished my love of sporting; so I eagerly accepted an offer that had been made me the first season I was at Tunbridge Wells of hiring the right of shooting over a property a few miles off, and where I went two or three times a week for this enjoyment. This sufficiently declared me a sportsman, in taste at least; and thence resulted, in accordance to the

usual attention and hospitality that I have everywhere experienced in England, invitations from various quarters to join in this sport: amongst others, from Summer Hill, where a good shot (but one without modesty) might easily have killed twenty brace of pheasants in a very few hours. Here again, a circumstance occurred which might have shaken a less eager sportsman than myself in his love of this amusement. The old game-keeper, who usually accompanied me; and for whom I had really a great regard, for he actually did show me where to find game,—this poor fellow, after a long service of forty years, just upon the point of receiving his retiring pension, disappeared, and after two days was found dead upon a hedge, the upper part of his head entirely blown to pieces by his gun having gone off in his own hands.

We had made a few acquaintances at Tunbridge Wells; amongst them was a numerous and very amiable family, spending like us the summer there. At their departure I received

a kind invitation to their country place in Cambridgeshire; not only to enable me to gratify, as they jokingly said, my "instinct of destruction;" but that I might see the famous Newmarket races, which would take place during my visit. Perhaps you do not know that they are the cream of all English races, consequently the first in the world; and to perfect my half fashionability I had only to visit these, as already I had been in some of the exclusives' boxes at the opera, also at Almack's, at Lady S.'s routs, and at the Duke of D.'s balls.

In the country-house where I am now to conduct you, you will find neither lords nor ladies by birth or creation, but only what in English is called "genteel people," and in French, "*gens comme il faut.*" Here is no gothic castle, no arched gateway surmounted by sculptured coats of arms, nor the numerous regiment of livery-servants ranged in the sumptuous hall. This is only the modern handsome villa, spacious enough, however, to

contain the large family who at present occupy it, as well as several of their friends. The house, without being splendidly, is elegantly, furnished; it contains all the comforts, the dear comforts, so inseparable from this style of establishment in England.

Place then this villa in a park of proportionate size, in which every evening at sun-set you may see the hares, rabbits, and pheasants come even on the lawn to play: to this add "the right of shooting" over three thousand acres of preserve, and the society of the amiable family which inhabit it; and who, notwithstanding their taste for the said comforts of life, and for the worldly pleasures of painting, music, and even of an excellent table, yet reassemble every evening before going to rest, to hear prayers read by the young mistress of the family, whilst her father, mother, sister, brothers, friends, and the domestics, all listen to her on bended knees; and you will have a just idea of the place and family where I went to spend a few weeks.

You would have been envious had you seen me on the morning after my arrival, (and almost on every other during my visit,) with two or three sporting companions, crossing and recrossing the fields in every direction as far as we could see; they were covered by turnips, whose long stems, wet with the dew, cooled our legs as we walked through them. Here it was firing to the right, firing to the left, firing behind, firing before, upon the coveys of partridges which rose at each minute from under our feet. To describe to you all the gyrations they made in the air before they fell, and the cloud of feathers which followed each joyful discharge when it had been well directed,—to describe all this, I say, would make you too envious; so I will spare you for the present. I am now going to conduct you to the Newmarket races.

We were distant ten miles from Newmarket, which is but a small town. The famous downs where the races are held are about a mile distant. This is the first of all turfs for blas-

ticity, and for its complete smoothness and flatness; it is also celebrated for the pure blood of the horses which run there. It is in this place that is seen the animal aristocracy of the country; their genealogies are kept with the greatest care; and such a horse or such a mare enters the lists with the names of his or her ancestors attached to his own. Sometimes considerable bets are made even on a colt yet unborn, which is to run two years after its birth.

The whole of the country in the neighbourhood of Newmarket is flat, and this vast plain is intersected by the remains of an ancient wall of defence, constructed, it is said, by the Romans. These remains are only a few feet in height, in form of banks, now covered with grass and weeds, and which, accompanied by a ditch, are about eighteen miles in length. The flatness of the country accounts for the excellence of the numerous roads which cross it in all directions, particularly towards Newmarket; and whether it

arise from this facility, from the real necessity of quick arrival, or from the dictum of fashion inspiring the desire of appearing to take part in the transactions of the turf, —whatever be the motive, you never see any one on these roads who is not going at the greatest possible point of velocity, generally drawn by post-horses; for so to be seen is to declare that you are going to Newmarket.

But this is not the animated scene of Epsom and Ascot; here there is no triple row of carriages, no fashionable stands with flags flying, nor are thirty thousand persons assembled as spectators. An hour even before the races commence, scarcely a soul is to be seen on the plain; the greatest number are still crowding the hotels, the inns, and the taverns of Newmarket; and amongst this crowd, although all are "men of the turf," are several great people, such as the Earl of M., the Marquis of W., who was, if you remember, some years since so great a favourite in the chief circles of Paris; also the old Duke of G. with his

spy-glass, which his friend and doctor, combined in one, carries for him. Then there is Colonel P., Colonel S., Lord T., Lord G., and his son, and many others whose names I cannot now recall to my memory.

The races at Newmarket are completely "a matter of business;" no acclamations, no tremendous noise, no necessity for clearing the ground by sharp application of the whip, no cords extended to keep the people within bounds, and to mark the direction of the course. Here it is well defined by the straight line of fine short grass, and by those Roman remains of which I spoke, and which in part bound it. Here are, at the most, a few dozen of carriages, belonging chiefly to the families of the neighbourhood; a few hundred persons on horseback; and, what is odd enough, three or four waggons, from which the horses have been removed, and on which some of the "great people" I have mentioned take their place, to command a better view of the race, which always terminates close

to them, for the length of the race often differs; so the goal is moveable, and is thrown further off, or brought closer at pleasure, and then the waggons follow its motion closely. For this purpose, the horses are kept near, and occupy themselves in eating between the heats, and during the long hours which precede the races; and, I dare say, it is with much regret that they find themselves so often disturbed in their peaceable occupation.

You must become acquainted also with the "betting-post" at Newmarket, which is isolated in the middle of the plain; and round it assemble all the betters, the owners of the horses which are going to run, and all, in fact, who are interested in the races. It is necessary, even for an Englishman, to be well versed in the language of the turf, to comprehend all that passes,—everybody screaming out at once the bets that are offered, accepted, doubled, tripled, and then written down in each pocket-book.

Except the exact time of the race, which certainly rewards one for all the preceding *ennui*, there is nothing at Newmarket which gratifies the eyes, nothing which speaks to the imagination. The lords, old and young, the fashionables, the betters, and the vulgarians, all are crowded together round the post; they are mounted on shabby horses or ponies, enveloped in their great-coats to protect them from the cold wind which begins to be pretty sharp on these plains about the end of October. The consequence of which is, a blue face, or a red nose, even amongst the great aristocracy. If I were not fearful of appearing unpolite, I should say that the whole company more resembled a meeting of horse-dealers, than what I had figured to myself upon the flower of all the turfs in England.

As to the race itself, it is the affair of a few minutes. During this short space of time, the expectation is so raised, so excited by admiration and pleasure, the emotion is so strong,

that long after the victory is decided it still agitates you. You perceive, at the extremity of the plain, a few small black specks, and some which appear more brilliant, although the eye cannot yet discern the colours; you immediately fancy the jockeys on horseback. Suddenly you hear the word "Start" repeated around you in every direction, followed by a murmur, and a sort of agitation in all the spectators; every eye is turned eagerly towards the same point. It is, in truth, the jockeys who arrive; ten seconds more suffice to distinguish their forms and the colours they wear. They arrive all together; and their rapid course strikes you so much the more, from their coloured mass being the only thing in motion throughout the whole of this absolutely naked plain: but, before you have been able to draw your breath twice more, which the emotion you feel renders difficult, they have passed you like lightning, the race is won, and many thousands of pounds lost!

If I were to describe a Newmarket race in English, it would be with these five words:

Start!——There they are!——Done!

The race is over!

So, good-b'ye.

LETTER XXXVI.

A new Friend.—Instinct in Friendship.—Sporting Excursion.—Old-fashioned House.—Welcome.—Sporting Colonel.

To-day I am going to try to render you really jealous of me, my dear Augustus. Being an ardent sportsman, you will enter heart and mind into my recital and enjoy it like an old friend.

Amongst the guests whom I found at the Cambridgeshire mansion, was one much about my own age, who was allied to the family by marriage; we had become intimate at Tunbridge Wells, and this intimacy was highly prized by me, as I daily discovered in him new and valuable qualities of head and heart. He had

much natural gaiety,—a qualification that is not very common in England,—as well as much originality and drollery of mind, which gave him a quick sense of the ridiculous; but his wit was always without malignity.

Putting out of the question the many beings in this world to whom one is totally indifferent, there is a sort of instinct in regard to others, which may serve as a guide or restraint for either giving or withholding one's friendship. We feel either an indescribable attraction or antipathy for those we may meet in the pathway of life. But, in order that these two opposite sentiments may be of use in directing the judgment, they must be free from all personal interest; the social position of the two parties must be pretty nearly equal; and there must be on neither side any expectation of future benefit, — except that accruing from agreeable society, — to influence the feeling of attraction; nor, on the contrary, any fear of injury or disadvantage, which might have the effect of producing a natural antipathy. In such cases one

may, I think, abandon one's self to the sentiments inspired, with some confidence and certainty; and here I did so without hesitation.

My friend and I left the villa, to pass a couple of days at his father's,—a clergyman,—who had kindly invited me to assist his son in the "general destruction" which he was going to make of his game; he being on the point of departure from his ancient family residence, and not wishing to leave any advantages to the poachers during his absence. His place was about eight miles' distance from the one where I was staying. A phaeton was sent to fetch us the afternoon before our shooting was to begin. As soon as our two guns in their cases, an ample provision of powder and shot, and all our little necessaries for the toilet, were put in the phaeton, we departed. After a few miles, we quitted the Newmarket road, and penetrated further into the interior of the country, taking a cross-road; and, after passing through two villages, (neither so picturesque nor so clean as most that I had seen in England,)

we arrived at the gate of a park which was as flat as the rest of the surrounding country. The winding road up to the house, about a quarter of a mile in length, was remarkable for the size and age of the trees which shaded it on each side.

Delaying my presentation to the rest of the family until the hour of dinner, which was fast approaching, my friend, whom I shall now call George, caused me to be conducted to the chamber destined to me. Its furniture was not elegant, like that at the villa we had just left; but of ancient style, and in keeping with the old house. My bed was sufficiently large to have allowed me to sleep across it, and of proportionate height, with ample flowered chintz curtains. The chimney-place also, in the old style, was high and deep, with a bright coal-fire blazing in the grate; before it stood a little airing-horse, with half a dozen snow-white napkins. The whole of the furniture was in the same fashion, and formed one of the most

comfortable bed-rooms that I have ever met with.

I soon heard a gentle knock at my door, and, upon my crying out "Come in," there entered a "trembling maid," bringing me a copious provision of warm water. On descending in due time to the drawing-room, I found there an elderly gentleman dressed in black, who was occupied, when I entered, in lighting the wax candles on the chimney-piece. From his venerable air, and from the courteous smile on his countenance, I immediately guessed it to be the Rev. Mr. J., and I asked his permission to introduce myself to him. He took me kindly by the hand; and, shaking it heartily, bade me "welcome."

When the dinner was announced, George, drawing me aside, whispered to me not to take any notice of the oil-paintings which I should see hanging up in the dining-room, as they were painted by his mother, who was but lately dead, for he feared to awake a painful remembrance

in the breast of his poor father; I, of course, obeyed. We were joined by another guest, an old colonel, tall and thin, and grey-headed ; he also had been invited to partake in the two days' sport. He talked much and long on the subject during the dinner, telling us of the immense quantity of game he had killed in his life.

To-morrow you shall have the details of our sport.

LETTER XXXVII.

Shooting Preparations.—Our Party.—Beating the Covers.—Profusion of Game.—My success.—A Morning's work.—Destruction of Pheasants.—Two Day's sport.

It is nine o'clock in the morning, the guns are in readiness and ranged side by side on the hall table, and we are in our shooting-jackets, the numerous pockets of which are well furnished with provisions of powder, shot, patent wadding, &c. We are in the mean time agreeably occupied in the breakfast-room, laying in another kind of store, consisting of slices of thin-cut ham, cold fowl, tongue, fried fish, fresh eggs, washed down with large cups of coffee or tea, with delicious cream; and all in such profusion as to defy even the appetites of the six hungry sportsmen that surround the table.

The Reverend Mr. J. was also of the party, in spite of his seventy years. He accompanied us, not so much to take an immediate part in the coming destruction,—for, as he himself said, he no longer possessed his pristine activity or quickness of eye,—but rather to preside over and direct the sport, and participate in the pleasure of his guests. Our party was strengthened by the arrival of a young baronet who resided in the neighbourhood; he had failed in the election of the preceding year, but expected more success with the pheasants, for he was said to be a "capital shot." One of the sons of our host had returned to his own home, his tastes and pursuits being turned to other objects; he was a great naturalist, mineralogist, &c., and not fond of shooting. As to the youngest, he was obliged to refrain, for, suffering under a nervous disorder, he dreaded the agitation caused by this exercise. He nevertheless offered with great good-humour to accompany us, that he might keep close to me, and help me to load quicker and prepare my ammunition.

Thus we were reduced to five guns,—the old colonel, who was to kill everything, the baronet, George (who had great reputation as a shot), the reverend gentleman, with his peaceable single-barrelled gun, and your humble servant.

We were not without some pretensions, as you will imagine when I tell you that a tolerably-sized cart, with one horse harnessed to it, was prepared in the back-court to accompany us, that it might transport the game to the house as we filled it; there was besides a dozen countrymen armed with great sticks to complete the battue when we should ourselves be fatigued. The covers nearly reached up to the house; and the evening before, whilst I was dressing myself for dinner, I had distinctly heard "the call" of the pheasants, as if they were saluting us in advance.

We began by beating the covers ourselves, crossing them in lines, and keeping at thirty or thirty-five paces distant from each other: the shots soon began to be heard; but it was only after the lapse of about half an hour, and when

we had gained the heart of the preserve, that we had really a glorious work to perform. We were enjoined by Mr. J. not to spare the game, and to kill all but the hens, whose sentence of death was put off until the afternoon.

I must confess that at first I remained greatly in arrear of the baronet and George in point of success, for they both made the hares, rabbits, and pheasants dance at every shot. At first I felt giddy at the quantity of game which rose from under our feet; however, I soon rallied my senses, and, regaining the coolness necessary, began to acquit myself better. I must acknowledge that I was a little anxious to do well, not only for my own satisfaction, and to gratify my own vanity, but also to satisfy that of my friend George, who had too much vaunted my prowess to these gentlemen.

As to the colonel, it turned out as I had expected when I heard him on the evening before puffing off his success; he killed about one piece in half a dozen, and took aim at all the game, whether they had risen before him or before any

other of the party; his ill-humour increased at each step: at last, just as we quitted the wood to cross an open space filled with low brambles, a magnificent pheasant started up before his very nose, so near as to fan him with its wings; the sudden noise and cry of the bird, acting I suppose on his nerves, caused him to discharge his two barrels at once, but ineffectually! I happened to be placed on his left side, and, forgetting in my anxiety that perhaps what I did was not over-courteous, I tried the chance and the superb bird fell.

This took place three years ago, and I doubt if he has yet forgiven me. The circumstance was too galling for his vanity, and it happened not only before the whole of the shooting-party drawn up in line and all still, but also before the beaters, who were close behind us, and from whom proceeded a half-concealed laugh, which only served to augment the expression of anger already sufficiently visible on his features. I tried to soften it by attributing my success to accident, or to the merit of Mr. Manton, rather than to myself;

but all was useless, and he only bit his lips without replying. A little time afterwards, George returned me the compliment, in rolling over a hare which I had missed. I immediately took off my hat, and, making him a low bow, thanked him for the lesson, and here again, and very unintentionally, I renewed my offence against the colonel, as every one laughed, and particularly the good old clergyman; the colonel alone retained his gravity.

By one o'clock, about forty pheasants were laid in the cart, and twenty or twenty-five hares and as many rabbits hung over these on branches placed across. This formed a pretty fair trophy, and a not very light weight to convey to the house, which our reverend friend then ordered to be done. A truce of three-quarters of an hour ensued, which we spent in reposing ourselves and "eating a bit." As you know in such cases nothing increases the appetite like success, so it happened in this; for, of the *bit*, (which was no less than an enormous pie, accompanied by a few bottles of hock,)

nothing remained except the white napkin that had enveloped it.

But the return of the cart re-awakened all our ardour, and it was with a merry cheer that we greeted it, for we had to refill it. This time we had not to seek our own game; we were to be placed outside of the cover, and the *batteurs* were to go in and beat, directing themselves towards us; and it was then that the real destruction began, particularly of the poor pheasants. Without exaggeration, it was by dozens at a time that we heard them rise; and whatever direction they took, separating from each other to try to escape, each of us was sure to get his share.

The youngest brother of my friend kept his word, he did not quit me; and without his aid I should never have been able to load fast enough to pay my compliments to half the game that passed either over my head or through my legs.

This scene lasted until about six o'clock in the evening; and we returned home, having

killed in all one hundred and eighty pieces of game, two-thirds of which were pheasants. Mr. J. senior had scarcely made any use of his gun during the day, his whole attention having been directed to the arrangement of the shooting, to placing us in the best manner, and even in himself occasionally joining the beaters; his seventy years did not prevent his passing over gates and ditches quite as nimbly as ourselves.

The day following we pursued the same occupation and with the same advantage; and then taking leave of the rest of the family, George and I departed for the villa. We had killed—listen well to this—three hundred and seventy head of game at least; and of the five shots who accomplished this work, really you ought not to count the old gentleman, nor ought you to *forget* the colonel.

Good-b'ye, my dear Augustus.

LETTER XXXVIII.

The English Theatre. — Dramatic Poets. — Neglect of the Drama.— Tragic Actors.— Unseemly Interruptions.— Comic Actors. —The Miller's Maid.— Rayner's Performance.— Singers.—Melodrama and Pantomime.

My excursions as well as my adventures are finished, my dear Augustus; and after a few words more, upon the English Theatre, which I shall hazard in honour of you, I shall have only to sketch one or two additional characters before I terminate the record of my "Impressions."

I am not going to undertake the praise of him who created English tragedy: the beauty of Shakspeare's pieces, his genius, his profound knowledge of human nature, and the skill with which he has brought into action the history of his country—a history so fertile in com-

motions and great events,—are now so well known and appreciated on the Continent, at least through the greatest part, that my feeble voice could add but little to his glory. The only observation that I shall permit myself is, that these admirable works alone might, and ought to have elevated the English stage much higher; and that in this, as in the case of the art of historical painting in England, it must be from a want of encouragement, of support, or of enthusiasm in their cause, that these two arts remain in so secondary a position in a country where so many others and where all the sciences are carried to so great a point of perfection.

England possesses, besides Shakspeare, several other excellent and remarkable dramatic authors, such as Massinger, Otway, and others, in tragedy; Beaumont and Fletcher, for every kind of drama; Ben Jonson in comedy, and many geniuses of later date, such as Congreve, Sheridan, &c. But, notwithstanding all this, it is not the fashion to go to the great theatres, Covent Garden and Drury Lane, although they

are magnificent and most brilliantly lighted, and although immense expense is incurred nightly for the accommodation of some thousands of spectators. Only a few private boxes are reserved, which are close to the stage: the whole of the great space which remains is open, and separated by partitions into large squares called boxes, in which entire families place themselves, having retained beforehand one or two of the benches with which they are filled. You see, therefore, that there is no complete separation; and, as you may suppose, this indiscriminate approximation to the vulgar is too great, and it is not *bonne façon* to expose yourself to this. Another reason explains this negligence of the *beau monde* for the theatre; namely, that the play commences at an early hour in both the theatres, and it is fashionable to dine very late.

Considering the great influence which the nobility of a country so aristocratic as England must necessarily exercise in almost everything, this neglect of the theatre would of itself be a

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real disadvantage to it: but there are other causes; the directors are abandoned to their own efforts, neither the king nor the government contributing to the support of either Covent Garden or Drury Lane; and these theatres are only open a part of the year.* Besides, the great size of the house (although frequently offering a superb *coup-d'œil*, from its brilliant illumination, from the freshness of its paintings and decorations, and from the dress of the ladies†) is detrimental to the display of talent in the actors, who, in order to make themselves heard and to produce effect, are obliged to have recourse to great exaggeration in their gestures, voices, and accent.

If the absence of the nobility, or of those who associate with or seek to imitate them, is disadvantageous to the success of these representa-

* In the summer, during the recess of Parliament, they are closed.

† In England, the ladies generally dress a great deal to go to the theatre; both married and unmarried women have their heads uncovered and adorned with flowers, or with toques, with feathers, &c.

tions, I do not know if the presence of another class, that one of the lowest of society, is not still more so. These people occupy what we call in France *Le Paradis;* and by their acclamations, their impatient cries, their custom of throwing orange-peel from this height into the pit, they too often distract the attention from the scene, and interrupt the silence which is so necessary to enable one to seize the inflexions of the voices, the almost imperceptible gesture, the clever repartee which good comedy demands if it be well played. You may imagine, then, what it must be for tragedy!

To this you may add, that in one evening you sometimes see in succession a tragedy, a melodrama, a little piece interspersed with songs, and a farce: from this cause many of the actors are obliged to fill characters completely opposite, and, as we should say, *sont mis à toutes sauces.* It is almost impossible that taste should be perfected by such means. The non-success of the Drama in England is certainly not attributable to any want of talent in the first-rate

actors, at least not in those who adorned the stage a few years ago; Kean, Young, C. Kemble, Macready,* are all actors of great merit in tragedy, and Shakspeare has found in them interpreters worthy even of him. I remember also to have seen John Kemble in one of his finest parts, that of "Coriolanus." Still these artists are ordinarily so ill supported in the secondary parts, the actors who fill them are so pitiably bad, that the effect is almost destroyed.

In one of the most affecting scenes of "Romeo and Juliet," (at the time to which I allude these characters were played by C. Kemble and Miss O'Neill,) at the moment that one's whole feelings were moved in the liveliest manner, you heard on a sudden a sharp screaming voice, that of the Nurse, who was calling in a tone as if she was being skinned alive, "Juliet! Juliet! Juliet!" This was like the cry of a cat, which, in the middle of the night, awakens you from

* Every one in Paris has seen Macready in *Virginius*.

a dream of bliss! The intention of Shakspeare was to interrupt the scene, but surely not in this detestable manner; which, without doubt, was adopted by the actress to please the galleries, who immediately answered her appeal by loud bursts of laughter! but then what became of the illusion? I could have scolded that woman; and yet she was considered a capital actress!

Again, figure to yourself a scene in which one of these first-rate actors is full of enthusiasm; suppose Kean for instance, so celebrated in his Richard III., when, with his low, hoarse, but expressive voice, he depicted all the subtilty, all the blackness of the royal monster! Imagine, I say, the thousands of trembling spectators listening in the profoundest silence,—when suddenly a great noise is heard in the corridors, people running and then rushing violently into the boxes, with their hats on, in order to seize upon the vacant seats as quickly as possible! I see you here opening your eyes in surprise: my dear Augustus, it is nothing but the half-

price audience who arrive; their occupations as clerks, as shopkeepers, the business of their counting-houses and shops being concluded for the day, they profit by the remainder in taking their half of the pleasure going on. But again, what is become of the actor's enthusiasm? must it not affect him like a glass of cold water thrown in his face? And the emotion, the shudder of the spectator, where is it?

Notwithstanding these obstacles, comedy is sometimes represented in perfection. At the same epoch of which I have spoken above, there was in London some excellent comic actors: Fawcett, in the parts of fathers; Farren in those of humorists, or in such as the *ci-devant jeune homme;* Munden and Dowton, in characters where goodness, abruptness, and passion are intermingled; the latter was the more natural in his acting, from his being in reality the character he personified, for, when he got warm and angry on the stage, it was no longer a part that he played, but he really followed the im-

pression of his own anger! I have been told that it often required some little time, and not a few efforts, after he had quitted the stage, to calm him. Then there was Emery, and Rayner, in those dramas which might be called Tragedy in low life. Rayner was especially admirable in the affecting piece called *The Miller's Maid*; the character is a mixture of roughness and sensibility; an assemblage of noble qualities, of striking courage, with common manners and no education. I shall never forget the terrible effect produced by his arrival on the scene towards the end of this piece with the young girl he loves in his arms, and whom he has just saved from a great danger. It is not the passion of a "fine gentleman," tender and romantic, that he feels; but it is that of the lion in the forest, of the African under his burning sky!—it is passion such as Nature inspires in all its violence! But I must give you a description of the scene:

Rayner has just heard from the lips of the

young girl, that she loves him only as a brother — that her affection is given to the Sailor, with whom he had already fought at the opening of the play, and whom he was on the point of destroying if he had not been stopped by the Miller. With his heart broken by this avowal, he wanders about the mill in despair, not knowing what to do, or where to go; in this state of mind he hears her cries upon being seized by the creatures of a *Roué* who had surprised her alone, and who are going to deliver her up to their master. Upon this he bounds forward, flies to her assistance, and, armed with an immense staff, quickly puts the ravishers to flight, snatches up the young girl in his arms, and arrives thus on the scene, still pale with fury and emotion: he holds her tight to his breast, he remains motionless, casting round him glances of frightful excitement, to see if any other danger dares to approach her!

The Miller, his wife, and the young Sailor, are there also, motionless, frightened, and in

the greatest astonishment. It was then that the scene commenced which I found so fine as a dramatic composition, and so admirably performed. The young girl, sure of her influence over him who loves her so truly, certain of the nobleness and rectitude of his heart, but fearing his impetuosity and the state of despair in which she sees him, does not try to disengage herself from the powerful grasp which presses her against him; no, it is by the sweet accents of her cherished voice, by words of kindness and affection, that by degrees she calms his tortured feelings, and soothes his anger. She appeals to his generosity, which she confidently reckons on; to his heart, which she knows and values; and she places her future happiness at his disposal! The stick, which he still holds in his hand, falls gently to the earth; the powerful arm which holds her relaxes insensibly; he puts his hand over his eyes to hide the tear which burns them. Then, suddenly raising his head, he looks once more fixedly at her that he loves better than

his own life; and, making a sign to the Sailor to approach, abruptly darts away, and disappears for ever!

Emery also, in the "Caliban" of Shakspeare, should have been seen to be appreciated. His performance also of the character of "Tyke," a son whose vice and debauchery have caused the ruin of his father, whom nevertheless he loves, was inexpressibly fine. I must not forget to mention the agreeable voices of Miss Paton, Miss Tree, and Miss Stephens, in little operatic pieces; and Braham, too, whose powerful voice vibrated and filled the whole of the immense house: most happily for himself and for his hearers, his visits to Italy had corrected him of his long pauses, his shakes, and roulades without head or tail, according to the English school.

But, after all, I perceive that the "few words more" that I was to add upon the English Theatre have grown into a long letter, and my subject is not half exhausted; so you must let me send you a second epistle, for it would be

unjust to pass in silence the two instances where the English excel all other nations, "and beat them hollow:" I mean in the melodrama, of which you have some notion; and in the pantomimes, which resemble nothing that we have on the Continent.

So, farewell till my next.

LETTER XXXIX.

Melodrama. — Dramatic Combats.—Pantomime.— Clown and Pantaloon.—Tricks and Changes.—The Clown.—Perpetual bustle.—Ridiculous Scenes.—Effect of Pantomime.—Liston. — Matthews.

To-day my task is to display, *envers et contre tous*, the superiority of the English melodrama; and, for this purpose, I commence by asserting that in a spectacle where everything is disposed to enchant the eyes more than to satisfy the mind, one of the most important points is already attained in England, in the magnificence of the scenery,—in the art with which the decorations are painted, the extraordinary effects produced in picturesque subjects and in wild and desert scenes, in the mists, the vapouring distance, the sea, the caverns, tem-

pests, dark or bright weather, all, in fact, which constitutes this species of spectacle. Nature is, indeed, imitated in the most perfect manner, and to the most complete point of illusion.

You may apply all that I have here said, and almost all that will follow, to the small as well as to the large theatres; of course, in proportion to their size. Yet I must beg you to keep in view principally the houses of Drury Lane and Covent Garden, for on them is my field of battle; and you know already that every description of piece is represented in both.

Two other points are absolutely indispensable in a melodrama,—furious combats, and death exhibited in all its horrible details; and I unhesitatingly declare, that there is no comparison to be made with English melodramas in these particulars. It is impossible to fight with more eagerness, with more skill, or apparent reality. I have seen a warrior who, before he attacked his implacable enemy, kissed the blade of his sword with a sort of enthusiastic

ardour, and even sharpened it on his arm, like we do a razor on a strap. This caused me at first a hearty laugh; but I assure you, as soon as the combat began, I experienced quite a different sensation. My warrior was engaged against a savage armed with a tomahawk; and the blows were exchanged with such rapidity, and appeared so seriously and furiously applied, that the illusion was complete: and when the warrior passed his sword, palpably for our eyes, two feet through the body of his adversary, coming out between his shoulders, I began to look around for some fainting ladies; but I was mistaken; it was very warm weather, and I saw no agitation but that of fans. There was, perhaps, in some instances, a slight air of satisfaction visible on the countenances of these fair spectators.

When death is to be represented, it is done with consummate effect. The victim rolls in the dust; and the convulsion, the trembling of the limbs, the vain efforts to pronounce a few words of vengeance or remorse,—all is rendered

to the minutest particular. But what a little deteriorates the truth of such scenes is, that generally the conqueror during the whole time remains perfectly calm, looking quietly at his vanquished foe, with his hand on the hilt of his sword, and the point turned towards the earth. It was in this manner that Richmond, in the tragedy of Richard III, stood coolly looking at the dying prince, whom he has just killed in a single combat at Bosworth field; where, in history, terminated the reign of the tyrant, and at Covent Garden or Drury Lane, the play of Shakspeare. It is true that the Earl of Richmond succeeded Richard on the throne, (under the name of King Henry VII,) which perhaps will explain satisfactorily his tranquillity in seeing his rival expire.

I must not forget Harley for lively parts. And then there is Miss Kelly, the pearl of actresses, she who can at will make you laugh or cry. The expressive mobility of her features, her clear voice, and distinct enunciation, her natural yet energetic attitudes, her skill in al-

ways being dressed in character, and the interest which she spreads on the whole scene immediately she appears, render her one of the first actresses in England, if not the very first.

But now for the pantomime! This is the most amusing monstrous assemblage of follies, nonsense, slaps and blows, and of scenes changing as quick as the combinations of a kaleidoscope turned round with alacrity. One cannot help thinking that the inventor of this species of amusement, convinced of the great difficulty of exacting a laugh from his countrymen, and of rendering them gay, must have said to himself, "A fourfold dose must be administered to produce this effect; so I will give them such a quantity at a time that they *shall* be gay, or I'll know the reason why." And surely, as far as fun, nonsense, and horse-laughs can go, he has kept his word.

Although filled with every kind of varying incidents, these pantomimes have all the same subject as a base; the main spring is the same, the end similar. It is always a pair of lovers,

who are turned by a fairy into Harlequin and Columbine, in order to avoid the pursuit of the father of the young princess, and of the lover that he favours: these two are also metamorphosed in their turn by another genius; the latter into Clown, and the other into a character which resembles in a degree that of *Paillasse*, and is called Pantaloon. The whole piece is composed of the innumerable tricks that these two couple play each other; without reckoning all those that the Clown himself practises upon his own peculiar companion, Pantaloon. There is no conversation on the stage, except indeed an occasional cry or droll exclamation which issues from the Clown in the heat of the action; but it is very difficult to distinguish them amidst the general row, which begins even before the curtain rises, and increases in violence during the piece, without a moment of respite. It is the orchestra which is working hard all the while without taking breath; they perform the air of an old English country-dance, and appear to enjoy the spec-

tacle themselves as they play,—I think, by heart and without music. Then commence the shouts of laughter and applause of thousands of spectators, of which a fourth is composed of children. The bellowings of the galleries surpass all description! Again, there is the noise made on the stage behind the scenes, the moving of the machinery, houses which sink down and disappear to make room for other objects rising in their place. The greater number of these changes are occasioned by Harlequin's wand, who strikes the ground each time a metamorphosis is to be operated. This wand, I must not forget to tell you, has been a present from his good fairy. Occasionally, Columbine screams out in fright as she is nearly caught, and then she recommences dancing with dishevelled hair, red, and out of breath. The pursuit of the Clown and Pantaloon never ceases; they are everlastingly running, tumbling against each other, thumping and falling down, and the whole time the orchestra continues its *tra là là là, tra là là là,* &c.

During all this noise and bustle, (which, however, the ear learns to endure after the first giddiness is over,) there follows a succession of the most amusing scenes; and these are arranged so drolly, the accidents are so burlesque, so comic, and so numerous, that I confess I have often laughed myself out of breath. The Clown is the most amusing of them.* Merely to look at him gives you an inclination to laugh. As far as I can remember, his costume is always white, with a pair of very ample unmentionables trimmed round the knee, sometimes with a little blue or red: then he has such a mouth,—two enormous lips which reach from ear to ear; and to see what he contrives to stuff into this interminable gulf to try to satisfy his insatiable voracity is *impayable!* whilst the great pockets of his nether garment serve to hold all that come in his way that is eatable: sometimes he seizes upon the leg of mutton

* The name alone of "Grimaldi" will dilate the physiognomy of the most sombre person in England.

which the butcher's boy is carrying on the tray over his shoulder, sometimes it is a loaf of bread stolen from the baker's basket, and all this is pocketed with the greatest ease. Meanwhile, he does not remit his pursuit of Columbine and her dear Harlequin ; nor does he neglect any opportunity of playing off the most mischievous practical jokes upon his partner, the poor old Pantaloon.

These scenes pass chiefly in crowded streets; you see open shops, people going in and out, and, in fine, a constant and general moving-about. Sometimes it is Harlequin who, to escape his pursuers, with great agility springs head foremost through a high window, breaking a pane of glass in his entry into the house: he is followed closely by Pantaloon, who endeavours to imitate him ; but, being unable to leap so high, falls back and upsets the Clown, who runs behind him : the latter starting up seizes upon a large pitcher, which is standing at the door of a grocer, and breaks it on Pantaloon's head,* who, in his

* I suppose his head is protected by an iron skull-cap, for the

turn, after standing as if stunned for a moment or two, (the other looking at him in an indescribable manner,) gives him a real English blow with his fist full on his jaw-bone; this sets him spinning round, and makes him shake his head as if to bring it back to its proper place. All this passes with a gravity so droll, and is done so naturally, as to produce shouts of laughter from all the spectators.

Some of the scenes are irresistibly ridiculous. I remember one in which Pantaloon is stuffed by the Clown into a cannon: his kind friend then applies the match to it, it goes off, and the fright which the explosion causes overturns him; he looks up at last, and, behold! his companion is stuck against the opposite wall, flattened like a bullet out of a gun! Another time, they are in search of arms; they find some; and the Clown, wishing to prove the goodness of a sabre, draws it, and tries it on

sound of the blow is distinctly heard, and is hard enough to kill an ox. Slaps on the face and boxing are imitated also in an incredible manner.

Pantaloon's neck; his head falls off, and rolls at his feet! He remains motionless with surprise; but when he sees him begin to walk about without his head, his knees knock together with fear: soon after, the head appears in a dish on a table, turning towards the Clown wherever he goes, nodding at him as if to say "How d'ye do?" whilst the body is behind him imitating all the other does. You may easily imagine the effect of all this upon the excited spirits of the numberless spectators!

I will finish by another joke of the same Clown, who on going to bed and wishing to blow out his candle, which is in a candlestick too high for him to reach, leaps up in vain several times, blowing with all his strength: at last he takes a chair, upon which he climbs, and then lifts up his head to recommence his puffing; but the light has disappeared, at least for him, for, whilst he was getting on the chair, it has descended within a couple of inches of the ground; he then looks for it without success in the clouds, and, upon suddenly lowering his head,

perceives it on the floor; he now gets down, and, whilst he is replacing his chair, the light re-ascends, and another, and another appears in every direction. These manœuvres increase in quickness until the spectators are exhausted with laughing. It is not, after all, the circumstance which renders this so ludicrous, but the comic manner in which it is all performed.

I must leave untold many other details of this kind, as well as the scenes of fairy-land introduced in these pieces, which are generally taken from Oriental tales, and add greatly to the amusement of the spectacle. If you find fault with it because it passes upon the same boards where an hour before you saw "Coriolanus fall," or heard "Antony haranguing the Romans over the dead body of Cæsar," I will reply, that it is not the less true that it acts as a very agreeable antidote to the gloomy ideas which a deep tragedy has left on the minds of a people already too cold and serious, and that the result is a little addition of good-humour,—

some few more ounces of *bon-sang*, as we say, in the veins of those who have witnessed it all, and who return home to their supper in a more merry manner than is usual with them.

For an indifferent author, nothing is more convenient than letters, my dear Augustus; for if you forget anything, there is always the resource of the *postscriptum*, which comes now so nicely to my assistance; as, when I spoke of melancholy, of spleen, or the gloomy ideas which are prevalent in England, I forgot to mention another means of dissipating them—namely, by going to see Liston* or Mathews in their different characters.

The first possesses the talent of being comic in the highest degree, not only in his acting, but in his aspect, throughout his whole person, and in all his gestures; he puts you in mind of Potier and Perlet, because, like them, he is an excellent comedian. But it must be confessed that his acting is almost always farce, broad

* One of his first characters is "Dominie Sampson," in a piece taken from the Guy Mannering of Sir Walter Scott.

farce; whilst Potier was at times very affecting even in his comicality, and often left his auditors between "a smile and a tear." It was towards the end of his dramatic career that this actor had attained his greatest perfection.

Mathews plays alone upon a stage which he calls "Home;" the newspapers announce that, on such a day, *Mathews will be at home*, and every one is anxious to visit him there. A man must be endowed with extraordinary talent, — his wit, his originality, his facility of elocution, must indeed be great, to enable him to entertain a large assembly, — to move their sympathy and to enchain their attention during three hours, (which I have seen him do several times,) and this without flagging for a moment; relating anecdotes, assuming various characters, representing striking portraits to the life! His French characters are admirable.

Adieu!

LETTER XL.

A Dandy.—An Exquisite.—Sybarites.—Luxurious Residence.—Boudoir.—Drawing-room.—Dressing-room.—Bed-room.—Roués.

Do you know what a Dandy is? There are at least ten different species of this animal. If you commence by the lowest, it is the city-beau, to whom I have already introduced you at Mr. Jackson's dinner, presenting an orange to a young lady, by taking up the fruit between two spoons, and extending his little fingers to have an air of delicacy, and to appear *unquestionably polite:* but this is a vulgarian; we must ascend the scale, passing by the ranks of this interesting class, such as the puppy, coxcomb, fop, the half-fashionable, the complete fashionable, &c. till

we at last reach the exquisite, the quintessence of all coxcombry conjoined. He shall be a young man, whether noble or *parvenu* it matters not so that he be rich; he must have an air of *nonchalance*, and appear *ennuyé* with everything. He hardly deigns to speak at all, it is too fatiguing for his delicate organs. If you have the honour of knowing him, and should meet him, he will address you, "Oh! how a-a-ye? am gad to see you;" but these words will be scarcely articulated, and pronounced in a drawling tone as if he had some impediment in his throat which prevents him from speaking: this will be all you can get out of him. He is the epitome of self-sufficiency, affectation, and impertinence: he despises every social talent, wit, and amiability, because he himself is incapable of either; for he appears only organised for putting on cravats, wearing a well-cut coat, choosing pommades, perfumes, &c.: his pride is to attend to no one but himself.

One of the best traits I have ever heard, and which perfectly characterizes the insolence of

the exquisite, is related of an officer in a certain *ci-devant* fashionable regiment of hussars: he was at a ball, and the master of the ceremonies offered to present him to a very pretty girl; the exquisite, lolling back in his arm-chair, putting up his glass to his eye, and looking at the young lady, replied, as if he were at a horse-dealer's, "Trot her out!"

You may find Sybarites in every part of the world, but I think they are more plentiful in England than elsewhere, and in no place is luxury and personal profusion carried so far; I will choose one for an example, whom I know intimately, but in whose character the principal qualification of his species is wanting—I mean egotism. Far from it, he is generous, most obliging to his friends, and hospitable; he is what we emphatically term *bon garçon*, possessing great gentleness and blandness of manners, and is neither dandy, coxcomb, nor exquisite.

Although he is no noble, he lives in the first society, as the numberless cards of lords on his

table or chimney-piece testify. At present, the *super* fashion is to furnish one's house in the mode of Louis the Fourteenth's time. The furniture of my friend's residence is profuse and superb; his apartment is *doré sur tranches* (gilt-edged), with embossed hangings, and encumbered with coffers and cabinets minutely incrusted with mother of pearl, brass, gold and silver, scented wood, and even rare and precious stones. You may perceive, through the glass doors of these elegant receptacles, dozens of magnificent snuff-boxes, and other gorgeous trinkets and jewels of our grandfathers, such as the tooth-pick cases which they wore in the pockets of their long satin waistcoats, often costing more than fifty guineas; he has also some charming pictures, after his own peculiar taste; amongst others, several well-chosen pieces of the celebrated Watteau. These are in his drawing-rooms: but as I am fond of description, my dear Augustus, I will continue, and give you an idea of the luxury with which some bachelors in England surround themselves.

Open that white door with gilt mouldings, and enter that boudoir; it is furnished in red velvet, bordered with gold-coloured fringes. The breakfast is prepared for himself, and for you, whom he expected; the service is of delicate *Sèvres*, and all the utensils of metal, such as teapot, kettle, &c. are in silver gilt and most richly chased. The table is placed near the fire, and in the corner next the wall is a soft stuffed low sofa, with plenty of cushions. This is the master's own place. With his hand on the bell, he requests you to choose out of the delicacies usually set apart as breakfast dishes, and as such selected by fashionable epicures; you do so, and are instantly supplied: how this is managed I know not.

This elegant little room, as well as the drawing-room, is adorned with pictures, but of smaller dimensions: here is a portrait of Madame du Barri, quite *en négligé*, which renders her *jolie comme un cœur*; also a sleeping nymph in a wood, surprised by a satyr: from this you perceive you are in a bachelor's house. To go into

the dressing-room, you must pass through the drawing-room, and enter by a concealed door into this sanctuary of white marble. On the right hand is a bath of the same material, of a most elegant form, above which are the bending necks of two swans, ready to supply you lavishly upon the slightest touch with a stream of hot or cold water; so that, at whatever hour of the day *monsieur* may fancy, the bath is prepared in the space of three minutes. In front of this, at the other extremity of the room, is the washing-stand, also in marble; here again are three sorts of water,—warm, cold, and hot,—always ready; each with its button. On the right is the toilet-table, which supports the various objects to render one presentable; and opposite to this is a lovely and graceful statue,—Venus on a pedestal. You may judge of and admire her beautiful contour and charming form, for she is completely *en déshabille*.

At last you enter into the bed-room, where a more tempered light reigns; here you perceive again, on one side of the sumptuous couch, a

little secret door, which is appropriated to the service of the apartment. I will only add, that this room is furnished as luxuriously and as full of comfort as the others, and, besides, contains a few paintings which from their subjects require privacy; not that I mean to insinuate that they represent anything shocking, or what need cause you to fly, yet truth obliges me to confess that it is almost a pity that they are so deliciously painted. There is one particularly, which may perhaps merit a reproach, for it makes the heart beat, and troubles the senses as you look at it, and besides pursues the imagination long after the eyes are turned away.

Augustus, I am going to make a long stride, for, from the man whose tastes I have just depicted, (and who, although a little eccentric, is a perfect gentleman in the fullest acceptation of the term,) I pass to the *mauvais sujets* or *roués* of England. In spite of all those qualities which I have so praised when speaking generally, yet I think that in this country exists the highest degree of immorality, the greatest de-

pravity of habits, among certain individuals possessing fortune, rank, and, in some instances, a noble and celebrated name.

There is only one, and but a very feeble excuse to be offered for them; is it, that they are led away by the facilities which an almost inexhaustible fortune offers them for present and future purposes. In a country where gold has the power of the wonderful lamp, they make use of it to evade the laws. The vices of the rich are the more inexcusable, as they invariably lead to the destruction of others; and particularly when they choose, as their victims, women without any means of defence; then their conduct becomes a piece of degrading cowardice.

Among these *roués*, I am acquainted with one (and he is a peer), whose profound knowledge of vice has made the most expert at Paris tremble and draw back; and this is saying not a little. Another was pointed out to me in a gay *salon* in London, with the additional intelligence that he had committed actions which

would have hung an ordinary man seven or eight times over! He also is rich and great.

But to express myself with greater calmness; it is too true, that in point of luxury, expense, and extravagance, there is no country which can bear any comparison with England. The facilities for enjoyment of every description are unbounded to a young man who knows that one day he must inherit many thousands a year, and that nothing can deprive him of this inheritance. This knowledge leads him to contract enormous debts, has already satiated him with pleasure, and worn-out his constitution by the time he arrives at manhood.

And tell me, what must he become, in whose bosom, at the age of twenty-five or thirty, every sentiment of delicacy and honour is already extinguished?—I do not speak of that honour which makes a man fight a duel.—I ask what is left to him? Nothing but to persevere in satisfying his debauched tastes, which are now like those of gamesters or drunkards, whose motto is, "the more one plays, the more one

wishes to play;" "the more one drinks, the more one feels the necessity of drinking."

And if nothing remains, neither heart nor honourable feelings, yet he still possesses the powerful spring which enables him to continue his pleasures—gold and credit. And such is the English *roué*.

God bless you, my dear Augustus!

LETTER XLI.

Women of England.—Contrasts.—Female Costume.—Duties of Women.—Visits to the Continent.—English Abroad.—Law-suits for Adultery.—English Women.

I AM now going to venture upon a few observations on the women of England: but I preface them by telling you that I am, by nature and education, strongly imbued with respect for the fair sex; and that if I were going to speak of an Iroquois woman, it would still be with reserve: so expect nothing else.

Elegance of appearance, an extreme nicety and freshness in the whole of the toilet, a gracefulness and suppleness in walk and gesture, an ability in exhibiting every advantage and in concealing every defect, a profound study of

the lessons of coquetry in order to attract and fix the attention of men, an ease and assurance in conversation, an influence and empire which are always created and exercised in society,—all this must be sought for in French women. A *real* English woman comprehends nothing of it; for, as I have said elsewhere, the reserve imposed on her is the first obstacle, and the education she receives is a still greater one.

The contrasts presented by a party of women in England are very remarkable; each of them will have taken a *hint* from the Continent for her dress or manner, and their efforts, sometimes successful, more often the contrary, are very amusing to observe. These contrasts exist often in the same person: the most perfect beauty of feature and form will be accompanied by a stiffness which completely disenchants: a woman of high stature, of which there are many in England, often possesses a gentle, infantine voice; another, fifty years of age, wears roses on her head, and a bouquet in

the belt round her waist; a fourth is dressed with infinite care, her toilet is costly, but throughout there is a waste of fine things,—mixtures which are incongruous, and which cause the whole to fail in the effect intended to be produced. By the side of a young, delicate, pale woman, with a melancholy and interesting air, you will see a portly highly-rouged dame *ramassée dans sa courte épaisseur*, (bundled up in her short thickness,) with a turban, a dress, band, gloves, and shoes all of different colours; and her enormous sleeves almost completely hiding her modest neighbour, who sits in perfect stillness with her eyes bent down.

In general, the dress of an English woman is more handsome in materials than fresh in preservation; they commonly sit down upon a chair as if chance alone had caused them to fall there, without paying the least attention to the manner in which their dress is placed under them, so that sometimes it is pulled all on one side, and gives an appearance of crookedness to the figure; and if they venture to rise, to move

from one end of the room to the other, the part of the dress which had been in contact with the seat having been well pressed, betrays in numerous folds this want of attention. Only recollect the care with which a French woman places herself in an arm-chair, taking hold of her robe on each side, raising her arms gently, like a bird spreads its wings, and then lightly seating herself! Even if she should throw herself upon it, exhausted by laughing, or half fainting from excess of emotion, still the robe will remain untumbled, there will always have been an imperceptible motion which will have preserved it.

I must not be understood to comprehend, in these remarks on English women, a certain class in high life. Amongst these, the habits and modes of Paris have taken firm footing; their intercourse with that capital is continual, and their physical education is most finished. You must also withdraw from this picture a number of English who reside on the Continent; they are a class apart, and to these also I destine a

few *scratches* when their turn comes. The women of whom I speak are the completely English, of the class called genteel, and the most numerous.

Englishmen have contrived to impress upon the minds of their wives that it is their duty to watch over, from morning till night, the direction of the house, the home interests, those of the children, their education, &c.; that out-of-door affairs belong to men exclusively. Doubtless, this is the primitive instruction of nature; the savages of America offer well-known examples, but *their* out-of-door business is somewhat different to that of civilized life—its importance somewhat greater, as on them depends the existence of the family. It is they who must brave every fatigue and danger to provide for their subsistence; it is they who must protect and defend them from all attacks. The out-of-door occupation of the Englishman is to attend his club, to amuse himself in gaming, horse-racing, at the opera, in riding, or in the pleasures of the chase; and this, not from

necessity but choice. Again, the praise which Englishmen prodigally bestow on their wives when they virtuously remain at home, answers two ends, as it flatters those to whom it is addressed, and satisfies at the same time their politic husbands. They avoid thus the terrible dangers, which, according to them, a woman never fails to meet if she goes often in society.

But, after all, in the many families where the position of the women is such as I describe, whether it arise in part from the causes to which I have attributed it, or whether it be the effect of the excellent education common to English women, the truth is, that their duties are most rigidly performed. It is impossible to meet with greater regularity, greater exactitude in the care with which they educate their children, and manage their household. I have always been inclined to compare the existence of an English family, (particularly one in the country,) to the progress of a clock, on which each moment of the day and the year is marked

and takes its turn. The basis of all this is a profound sentiment of religion, which makes part of their education: it is rare to find an English woman who does not fulfil its behests, —it is the first lesson she receives,—it is the first she tries to make her child comprehend.

Many an English husband puts on a long face when a tour on the Continent is proposed. The experience that has been acquired, the change it has produced on many of their ladies, is doubtless the cause of this repugnance. I have known several who were quite discouraged at their first return to their country. "There were no longer the pleasures of the Continent, the agreeableness of the men, their apparent devotion to the ladies; and, above all, that dear *sans façon* which renders everything pleasant," they exclaimed; "Englishmen are so heavy!—the climate of England is so bad," &c. It is to be hoped that their regrets soon fade away, and that they resume, after a time, their former occupations and feelings with pleasure.

Of the number of English families which

reside on the Continent, either in the capitals or in provincial towns, (it is well known from motives of economy,) much might be said; but I will maintain my usual habits of discretion, and make but a few passing remarks on them. Their economical manner of living is nearly equal in expenditure to the wealthiest in the places they inhabit (excepting in two or three of the great capitals); from this result such airs, particularly amongst the ladies, that are really *impayables;* and, what is better still, it is among themselves that they establish the greatest distinctions! They carry with them their exclusiveness, their aristocracy, the same as in London; they are difficult of access to each other, they only receive those of distinguished name or title! the party must have been presented at St. James's! and yet—would you credit it?—three-fourths of these very people have never been in anything like high society in London! Their very names have never even been heard there!

There is another thing very remarkable in the

customs of the English; namely, the pride, the haughtiness of many, as well as their overstrained opinions of the qualities essential to sustain what they call "the high character of a gentleman," put in contradiction with their receiving payment of damages from him who has seduced or run away with their wives. This is a problem I find most difficult to solve; there is an anomaly, a sort of ridicule attached to the idea of being materially consoled by money for a moral pain or loss, in repairing one's honour by receiving what it is not even honourable to ask. Explain this, Augustus,—you who have always been my master in reasoning and logic. I do not speak of the *people*, remember. Among them, for the same cause, a man drags his wife to the market-place, with a cord round her throat, and sells her to the highest bidder, sometimes for "two shillings and sixpence;" but this is a farce which is now rarely played, and which John Bull only laughs at; and it is, you know, contrary to law. The practice of which I spoke above, is a question of social

life: it is done by the noble and the fashionable; indeed, let me say, *en passant*, that it is among the latter that it most frequently occurs, and where there is the most risk of its occurring.

As I am on this subject, which, when I commenced my letter, I foresaw I could not well avoid, I must add that an English woman seldom stops in a fault of that kind *half-way*; it is done completely, — heart and soul are in it; or, in other words: "*Lorsque les Anglaises jettent leurs bonnets, c'est toujours par-dessus les moulins.*"* A harsh observer could say that the cause of this romantic disregard of propriety arises from the complete loss of reputation which always follows a fall of this kind in England; but this is neither just nor generous. I should be much more inclined to think that Nature has given to women far more weakness and enthusiasm, than courage or inclination to brave the laws of society, and society itself, in thus throwing down the gauntlet.

* "When English women throw thier caps off, they cast them completely over the mill."

You smile here, I am sure, accusing me of getting out of my hobble by a half-compliment to the frail English fair ones; but, if there is any truth in my opinion, it is equally applicable to women of all countries: and as to English women considered apart, it is not by individual faults found in certain classes—it is not by examples which prove their rarity by the very *éclat* they produce, and the reprobation which follows them, that the character of a people can be judged. Unimportant as is the opinion of any one individual, yet I feel I have the right to give one; for it is one formed after a long residence in England, during which I lived on terms of the greatest friendship and intimacy with many families in various ranks. And I say, and boldly say, that, if I am asked for an example for a mother to follow, the model of a respectable life, an assemblage of talents, education, and modesty, an unfailing confidence in God, whether in prosperity or in adversity, I could cite thousands among women whose nobleness of feeling seems concentrated in one sentiment,

the most touching of all,—"the desire of rendering their husbands and children happy!" And I would moreover point to England, and say, "Go there and seek it!"

Adieu!

LETTER XLII.

Catholics and Protestants.—Their Ministers.—Clerical Preferment. — Church Patronage. — Fashionable Clergymen. — Country Clergymen. — Conscience. — Catholic Austerity. — Protestant Contrast.—Happy Life.

I DOUBT if two men, filling the same position, having the same pursuits and functions, their life directed to the same ends, can yet differ more in their manner of acting and modes of existence than the Catholic priest and the Protestant minister.

Here I pause a moment to tell you, my dear Augustus, that I have no intention to enter into a theological discussion, or even to make a profession of faith. As I have said in another place, religion is a subject by far too serious to be treated in these familiar letters, and one

on which I would not enter here, even if I were capable of doing so with advantage to others or to myself. I shall therefore endeavour to present to you the side of this subject only which offers some assimilation to my general theme—society. I shall only speak of the impressions I have received in contemplating these characters so dissimilar, and then you may draw your own conclusions.

The physical or material life of a clergyman in England is essentially different from that of a *curé* on the Continent; and, in this point of view, the former may be called worldly, whilst the existence of the latter is passed, or is supposed to be passed, in the greatest retirement and even austerity. But do not fail to remark that, notwithstanding the enjoyments which a clergyman finds in the world, where he is received like any other gentleman, (though with the restrictions that his character imposes on him,) his duties become more numerous and more difficult to fill; he is always in contact with others, and placed before all

eyes. His power is not founded on the influence and persuasion exercised in the silence of the cloister or the confessional, but on conviction and example; and his part in life is like that of any other man.

Under his own roof, in his own home, where people so frequently put aside the mask, and leave off acting for the world, a clergyman has still observers, has still witnesses, for or against him, in his wife and children. And what a crowd of reflections fill his mind! what encouragement! what a curb to him when from the pulpit he is explaining the holy Scripture, the words of God, — when he preaches the maxims of virtue and religion,—and then lowers his eyes and sees his own family, his own children, looking at him, listening to him, and judging him!

The Catholic priest is alone, absolutely alone in the world; he has no witness of his conduct but himself. He is seen only at the altar, or through the grate of the confessional; and if the hat is taken off at

his approach in the street, it is rather to his garb (which publicly announces his character) that this homage is offered, than to the qualities and virtues he individually possesses; for two-thirds of those who salute him can only suppose them to exist. His power also to inflict punishment, penances, to absolve sin, and to penetrate by confessions into the recesses of the most secret thoughts of men, gives him in the eyes of the devout and the ignorant a superiority of nature which the protestant clergyman possesses not, nor would like to possess. The superiority of the latter must be founded on education, experience, and example.

He whom we call in France Mr. le Curé (I mean the *Curé de village*, who dines at the great man's chateau on Sunday,) is often (I know many personally) quite as good, as virtuous, in his sphere, as the English clergyman of the same rank; but his education, his manners, his social functions, his means of existence, are infinitely inferior.

To become a clergyman in England, a man must pass through the Universities of Oxford or Cambridge, and must be ordained* by a bishop. The religious corporation, as well as many other institutions, suffers under one of those diseases which are so difficult to cure radically, and is one to which the attention of the reformers is at this moment directed. I allude to the privileges, the sinecures, which cause so much injustice and hardship. The livings are held by the gift of the landholders, the nobles, and even of the ministers of the crown; they may dispose of them (without receiving money) to whomsoever they choose. The revenues arise from a collection of the tenth part of the returns of the land, and this is what they call *tithes* (the now great subject of discussion for Ireland). But a layman cannot touch this revenue, consequently the donor will appoint a friend or relation.

* There are some, however, who have received orders without having been educated at the Colleges; but this is uncommon and difficult to obtain.

From this you may easily conceive how many intrigues there are to obtain livings, for some are worth from two hundred even to five thousand pounds per annum.

Imagine a bishop going to pay his court, and making a profound bow, to one of those rich *roués* whose lives I have before alluded to, or to that nobleman, for example, who by his actions has more than once deserved hanging, and from whom his lordship, in all the sanctity of his profession, asks the favour of such or such living in his gift for one of his own *protegés;* and this man, who would make the devils themselves tremble, grants the power of reading the holy Scriptures in the temple of God!

The church also becomes a resource for the younger brothers of those noble families where the eldest son takes possession of the whole of the fortune. But here, alas! with regret I say it, not always is exhibited the character of a clergyman such as I have delighted to trace, and to hold up to your

esteem and admiration. They are for the most part young men brought up in luxury and indulgence, who have passed through the universities, rather employed in drinking champagne, gaming, and making love, than in studying theology; consequently, when they enter holy orders, they are incapable of fulfilling the serious office to which they are called. Many delegate their sacred duties to some poor curate with the appointment of fifty or sixty pounds per annum, and the rest of their incomes they expend in every sort of worldly amusement.

I recollect hearing one of these fashionable clergymen, who preached in a chapel not very far from Bond-street; his sermons announced a great severity of doctrine, and a harsh dictating tone in the reprobations addressed directly to his congregation upon the sinfulness of worldly pleasures and vanities, and this with great affectation of manner and pronunciation, and with curled hair carefully arranged on his forehead; in fact, he was a

real dandy, with his white cambric handkerchief in his hand!

But let us return to the class—happily much larger—which may be considered as forming the true support of the Protestant religion; I mean the country clergymen, those residing in and near the country towns and villages. The more simple their station, the more perhaps we shall find to esteem in their conduct, the more striking their example in the sphere in which they live. I have, on many occasions, attentively observed their mode of existence, and it appears to me the most happy that is to be attained on this earth.

Supposing him to possess a clear conscience, sincerity and rectitude of intention, and a firm belief in the simple faith which he professes and is called upon to teach, the life of an English pastor appears prepared for, and disposed to sustain in every moment, that happiness of which I have spoken. The combinations assembled to render him thus happy are so visible, so tangible, that, if

he is not happy, it can only be by his own fault. From his peculiar position, he can never be in the way of another; there is no pure and precious enjoyment which home can offer, no recreation or reasonable amusement, which is not in his power. He can afford to offer hospitality to others, he receives it in return; and the respect and consideration paid to him are apart from the pretensions of society, and cause jealousy to no man: he accepts them as they are, simple and free from all worldly interests.

I must not omit to observe that the society in which clergymen are met, knows well how to appreciate them and really honour them; not because they are ministers of the church, but out of respect to every worthy action of their lives. The best proof of this is the general contempt which follows an opposite line of conduct, or any dereliction of duty. Of this too I have seen examples under my own eyes.

The life of a Protestant clergyman affords

the best means of securing a pure and unblemished conscience. Let us consider the unfavourable influence, too real to be disputed, which an agitated mind and tormented feelings must have on the constitution and health — first of all blessings,—and you will be of my opinion that a life, more than any other sheltered from such attacks, must be enviable. It is impossible to find in society any other situation which does not call for many acts of deception, such as the *finesses* of politeness; envy, ambition, the numerous causes, in short, which destroy tranquillity of mind, and too often of conscience. With the latter there is no arrangement to be made; it is an eternal witness of all our thoughts, of all our actions; an inflexible untiring judge, who accompanies us ever, even in our sleep; one who never pardons. The immortality of the soul is more revealed to me in this thought than in all the fine discourses which have ever been made on the subject.

But to return. A Catholic priest, however

pious, however irreproachable in his conduct, is exposed to constant trials of his conscience. His isolated position, the severity of the laws of his vocation, exact from him a superior degree of virtue; and to maintain this, a resolution is necessary, which is perhaps beyond the moral strength of man. He pronounces often, by devotion, words to which his understanding refuses assent; if he is really sincere, he yields from terror; if he is a hypocrite, his conscience is there to tell him so incessantly. In the bottom of his heart Nature speaks, and is always combating the vows that he has sworn to fulfil. He must renounce many things that he knows are enjoyed by his fellow-beings, and valued above all price! And then, that other happiness! that which his religion sanctifies, at the same time that it forbids him even to think of it for himself! His life, morally and physically, is one eternal struggle! It may inspire respect, nay, admiration; but it excites regret for so much rigour, which is in contradiction with what Nature and God himself has implanted.

Let me quit this picture, and turn my eyes to a state of existence so much more natural, that of the Protestant minister. Not only is he protected from the moral sufferings above cited, but he is free from those which are felt in the world, where so many different interests are in continual opposition, and with which he has nothing to do; his position and character completely keep him free. I must also place by the side other advantages which he possesses; which, however physical they may appear after what I have said, are nevertheless very valuable to poor human nature, and which an English clergyman, I assure you, knows how to appreciate.

He has a wife—one of those women I have sketched at the end of my last letter; he has children who ensure his happiness by creating for him the greatest interest in life; he has a home, simple perhaps, but one where reign the greatest order and regularity, the nicest care: his existence is tranquil; he is respected without, and cherished within; he has health, arising

from exercise,—tranquillity of mind, from a conscience void of great offence: and then, dear Augustus, place this pretty cottage, and he who inhabits it with his amiable family, by the side of a bright green meadow, a mile from the village where is situated the church, and where every one blesses and respects him, and you will own that this is an existence worthy of envy!

It is the best I could desire for the best of my friends.

Adieu!

LETTER XLIII.

Estimation of England.—General Cleanliness.— Borders of the Rhine.—Wretchedness of the Towns.—Misery of the People. —Obstacles to Improvement.—People of Education.—Bad Habits.—Pavements in London.—Clean Hands.

My dear Augustus,

However slight may be the sketch I give you of England, it has at least the merit of being a faithful one; and if I succeed in imparting to you a few exact notions of this country, my aim will be attained.

The circle that I have traversed has certainly been small in comparison with one which should include all the remarkable things that England contains,—things which others have seen, and perhaps better appreciated than I could have done; but it is likewise certain that, as all

that I have met with has not been expressly arranged in order to fascinate my eyes and imagination, but has been real, my description cannot but serve to give a just idea of the country. It is probable that any other person in my position who might have followed a route diametrically opposite, he turning to the right and I to the left, would have met with pretty nearly all that I have described. Consequently, the wealth and prosperity of the country, the national dignity found in every rank of people, and the many other advantages that I have eulogized, passing over many of which I am ignorant,—all these, I say, do not merely exist in the small circle trodden by me, but are spread over the whole of England. I do not here speak either of Scotland or Ireland, as I have visited neither of those parts of the British dominions. I follow the same course of reasoning, respecting the defective points which are to be found in this country as well as in all others, and which have also not escaped my observation.

Amongst other qualities which distinguish the English, there is one most incontestable, one from which results an infinity of advantages; namely, the extreme cleanliness general amongst them, the peculiar attention that they pay to personal neatness. Also that abstinence, even amongst the common people, both in their families and in the streets, from all those indecent or indecorous habits, which are so common and so disgusting on the Continent; from which even the women, I am ashamed to say it, are not free; and which place the human creature below the level of brutes; for *they* in general love cleanliness, and some not only avoid filthiness by an instinct of their nature, but even, in satisfying its wants, fly to privacy and concealment.—Try to comprehend me, as I cannot venture to be more explicit.

Of the Continental countries, I will choose one as a contrast, which has been the most praised, particularly during the last fifteen years that Fashion has ordered her votaries to visit it. It has been the subject of endless

pamphlets, "Tours" filled with romantic descriptions, embellished with engravings, and with accounts of all the ancient legends attached to these places, whilst not one of these books, as far as I recollect, has said one word of the condition of the people who inhabit such charming sites. I speak of the country through which the Rhine flows. This river is extolled, and justly, for its beauty, its grandeur, its majestic windings in its passage through mountains whose heights are crowned by ruined castles, and whose perpendicular sides are covered by its vineyards famous throughout the whole world. All this is fine, indeed; but look at it *near*, look closely at the towns, the villages which "adorn the borders of the Rhine," as the guide-book says; on passing which, the English lady, seated on the deck of a steam-boat, with her glass at her eye, exclaims, "Delightful, charming, exquisite!" as she is rapidly carried past them, and sees them only at a distance from the centre of the stream! Stop at these places, enter them if you please, go

through them, and then judge of the habits and social position of the inhabitants!

You will first be disgusted with the odour of stagnant streams which have no issue from the streets, by the filth of every description piled up before the half-falling houses, through whose naked windows you see a miserably-furnished sombre interior. Here and there you will meet with a few small shops, but they are poor and shabby; you are pushed about in dirty, narrow streets, by ill-dressed, ill-mannered people. And yet it is amidst all this poverty, all this degradation, that you arrive at those superb churches, at those remains of ancient grandeur, those ruins full of historical interest and beauty!

I ascended the Rhine from Cologne to Mayence, a distance of about one hundred and twenty miles; I stopped at Coblentz, and afterwards at Bingen, a small town much celebrated for its picturesque situation, it being placed at the extremity of one of those angular bends which the Rhine forms; and it is to that town

that my reproaches are particularly addressed: thence I proceeded to Mayence. In the four principal towns, and in the country that surrounded them, particularly in the vicinity of Coblentz and Bingen, I found the situation of the people, their manner of living, their moral and physical existence, always equally miserable, and, I may say, uncivilised.

Upon seeing the Rhine, and those who people its borders, a poet or an enthusiast would not fail to cry out, that, if the ancient Heathen gods still existed, the deity of this stream would rush from its waters, shaking with indignation his damp, green locks at the sight of these lovely shores so contaminated, and, with one stroke of his trident, would cause all those dirty villages, with their inhabitants, to be swallowed up, and leave Nature alone and triumphant in all her beauty! But I, who am no poet, would destroy nothing; most certainly not the fine road constructed by Napoleon, which follows so faithfully every bend of the river. I would also preserve those precious

vineyards which ascend the mountain's side; but, above all, I would, if I could, ameliorate the condition of the poor people.

Go, my dear Augustus, and ask this of the King of Prussia, of the Prince of Hesse, for each of these *souverains* possesses a portion of this beautiful country. Go, and be refused. You will be treated as an impudent madman who wishes to overturn the constitution of two states, because you desire a moral education and a better religion for the people, the poor people!— because you wish to remove them from the influence of a bigoted clergy, and give them a religion in which they look up to God alone! Dare to ask more liberty, more wide-spreading rights, more encouragement and facility for external commerce, better internal communications; ask some such sacrifices on the part of these governments, and you will be called a visionary at the best, even if you escape the terrible imputation of being a republican. You will be told that the people are happy as they are, and that they owe that happiness

to their ignorance of a more elevated state of being.

I must now speak of a class actually superior, in the defects of which the government has no part; for examples of which I will go no farther than the steam-boat where I left my English lady with her raised eye-glass admiring the views. Among the Prussians or others whom I met with on the Rhine during the last fine season, either travelling for pleasure or business, there must have been many persons of talent and education; indeed, it was sufficient to exchange a few words in conversation with them, in order to be convinced of it; and yet, under what a vulgar exterior, under what gross habits, are these advantages concealed! Why is this? I am more struck by it perhaps from having fresh in my memory the habits and people of England; this, doubtless, renders me more difficult to be pleased. But is it indispensable in Germany, at least in the part I have seen, to have dirty hands because you are a literary character,—an histo-

rian,—a natural philosopher? Why must you exhibit black teeth, half decayed by the excessive use of tobacco, and have your linen impregnated with the colour and smell of the smoke?

What surprise would have been entertained by the punctilious Lord Chesterfield,—who wrote to his son that a gentleman could be always known by his manner of eating, of sitting at table,—if he had chanced to find himself at dinner in a steamboat with such company as I have described? What would he have said on seeing these men taking up their sauce with a knife, wiping that instrument, and its companion the fork, on the remains of a bit of bread which is left thus *barbouillé* on the table until the arrival of the next dish? A fainting fit must have been the consequence.

At first sight these observations may appear futile; but how many other more degrading habits do they not lead you to suppose? In human things there is always an imperceptible chain which unites together what is valuable, and another which performs the same office

for what is bad. Thus, one good habit always produces another: so the lower link of the chain, whilst isolated, may appear indeed indifferent; but if you consider it conjointly with the whole, and see the good which results, you own its importance.

Again, without quitting common—nay, vulgar examples, if you will call them so, you have heard me extol the large pavements which are to be found in every town in England, particularly in London throughout its great immensity! Well, let me trace the tenth part of the benefits which arise from this one convenience:—First, much greater security for women, children, aged and infirm persons, who are protected by it from the accidents which would infallibly be occasioned by the thousands of vehicles of all descriptions ever in movement in London, and which themselves profit by this security in going more rapidly to their place of destination. Secondly, a quick and uninterrupted communication for the thousands of people on foot, who have affairs of various im-

portance in different parts of the town, which daily communicates with every quarter of the globe. After the most violent rain, a little sunshine or wind will dry these pavements in the space of a quarter of an hour; this may help to account for the cleanliness of the dress and shoes of the people. Thirdly, the separation which it establishes between the handsome and innumerable shops, and the centre of the streets, where the carriages are confined; keeping the former free from mud: tradesmen can thus afford to use those brilliant plate-glass windows, through which you perceive the wealth of their splendid magazines, their excessive neatness and magnificence.

I should never finish if I tried to enumerate every advantage of this chain, which after all begins with so simple a thing as a few large stones placed together. Do not then, Augustus, despise my *foot pavements;* and believe I could say as much, in an inverse ratio, in taking for the first link of my chain, dirty hands, neglected teeth, a never-ending pipe, and gross habits.

It is no joke when I tell you that a stage-coachman in England has always clean hands. Beginning at this point, you may go a long way.

Good-b'ye .

LETTER XLIV.

Education in England.—Periodical Publications.—Agriculture.—Turnips introduced by Lord Townsend.—English Farm-house.—Gratitude.

Even in the very lowest classes in England, it is difficult to find a person who does not know how to read or write. There is scarcely any village, however insignificant, which has not its "national school;" and, without meaning any offence to other countries, I think I may assert that the education of the people in England is superior to that of any other.

But there are other sources of instruction besides that of these schools, by which the middling class, embracing in itself two-thirds of

the population, profit. 'These consist of the immense number of periodical publications, by which knowledge adapted to all situations is spread over the whole country. Almost every town possesses one of its own. The most celebrated are the "Quarterly Review," (Tory politics,) "The Edinburgh Review," (Whig,) "The Westminster Review," (Radical,) "The Monthly," "Penny," and other Magazines; besides many works of the like description published by different literary and scientific societies, giving information on all the arts and sciences, and even on religion; for there are some published by Methodists, Evangelists, &c. In fact, every sect, every party, every opinion has its organ; and when you consider that the most simple elements as well as the highest branches of arts and sciences are therein treated,—that there is no subject left untouched,—that these works are written and edited by men of the first talent, and that general information is thus placed at the command, and brought to the level of the

plainest understanding, by means of the cheapness of these publications, the simplicity of the language in which they are written, and the readiness of communication from one part of the kingdom to the other, you will easily conceive the superiority of information of which I have spoken.

Doubtless, in works of this description, where so many different subjects are brought forward, many are treated very superficially, but still in every page there will be some information or advice suited to one or many individuals. I have met with people in society, who, by a regular perusal of this sort of works, have acquired a great fund of what is called "general knowledge," without their being perhaps very well versed in any one topic; and it was impossible to touch upon any subject in conversation, in which they did not immediately bear the principal part. Then you must not forget the innumerable newspapers and journals which are sent from one part of the kingdom to the other,

and which give to the inhabitants of the most retired corner of the distant counties, notions respecting their political position, their rights, immunities, charters, taxes, together with information of every act of their Government, or that of other countries. I remember, one day, meeting a peasant on the road from Tunbridge Wells to Summer Hill, who was driving, *sauf votre respect*, a herd of swine, and reading a newspaper! I stopped to speak to him, that I might assure myself of the fact, and found that it really was "The Times" that he held in his hand.

I am myself indebted to several of these Reviews for much useful detail, and for many general notions on the state of the country, which, even with more time and opportunity, I could not have acquired from my own experience. For instance, it is rarely that a man of the world can know much about agriculture (unless indeed he possesses an estate which he manages himself); it is impossible to distinguish the amelioration which such or such a field may have undergone, by merely walking across it, or

by passing it in a carriage; but the information of the press supplies the necessary knowledge: whilst, with quite as great ignorance of the mode of producing certain manufactured articles, a person can judge of their improvement immediately they are brought before his eyes. It is not necessary to be a mechanic in order to comprehend and appreciate the ingenuity of a new machine; if it be only half explained, one may guess the rest, as well as the advantages likely to result from it; to me nothing is more interesting than this.

Thus, upon the subject of agriculture, I have been able to discover very little of myself. I could see the superficies, the bright golden colour of the full-eared wheat, the fresh green of the cultivated meadow, the ripe grain with elevated slender stalks, five or six feet in height, waving so gracefully in the evening breeze, like the undulations of the sea. I could, it is true, discern that the fields were well drained; that the farmer had well manured and cleaned his land, and that the labourer worked incessantly.

All this is easy to seize upon by the medium of the eyes, and thus one may admire agriculture without understanding the means which sustain it, or their most precious results; so, if I add a few words more on this subject, you must conclude that it is rather taken from what I have heard and read, than from my own experience.

What has considerably added to the product of the land in England, is the general introduction of the culture of artificial meadows, and the alternate system of ploughing and herbage mutually supporting each other. The green crops furnish an immense supplement for the food of cattle, who in their turn assist greatly in manuring and enriching the land. The use of more perfected instruments, and the application of machines to the different operations of agriculture,—formerly performed by manual labour,—have considerably diminished the number of men and horses employed, and the still greater number which of necessity must have been employed in the more perfect system of agriculture now adopted.

Another source of agricultural prosperity in England, is the adoption of enclosures, which dates from the year 1797, when (I believe) the first act for this purpose was passed. Dividing their fields by high and strong hedges, and generally into rather small spaces, the English farmers gain many advantages; the grain, the herbage, the crops of every kind, are better sheltered from storms and high winds, better protected from trespasses, whether of cattle and other beasts, or of man.

From these enclosures also arises a great facility to the farmer of removing his cattle from one meadow to another, as his convenience may dictate, and keeping them secure by barred gates, shutting with locks. The absence of wolves, (which, according to Voltaire, explained how English liberty extended even to the sheep,*) the pain of death — the penalty awarded for

* It is said that in a large assembly of literary men, Voltaire interrupted an orator, who, descanting on the liberty enjoyed in England, had just cried out that sheep even enjoyed freedom in that country. "You forget, sir," said he, "that there are no wolves in England!"

either sheep or horse stealing;* and again, the hedges surrounding and protecting them, give great security and tranquillity to cattle of all kind.

I found, in one of the periodical works which I have mentioned, some curious particulars about the enormous increase of a plant which was first introduced into English agriculture by Lord Townsend, on his return from Germany, whither he had accompanied George the First as secretary of state in one of his excursions. He had remarked there that turnips (then scarcely cultivated at all in England) were planted in extensive open fields; they were used as fodder for cattle, and at the same time gave value and fertility to land arid by nature. On his first arrival he was much ridiculed, as he brought with him seeds of that plant; and the witty courtiers of the day called him "turnip Townsend;" but he did not the less continue his endeavours to get this root adopted by his own farmers, and its benefits

* Commuted to transportation.

were soon acknowledged. Since then its culture has spread all over England; and in the statistical researches of Mr. Colquhoun, it is specified that the annual revenue derived from this plant amounts to 14,000,000*l.* It will appear evident that the subsequent advantages drawn from these crops, must greatly exceed its value as fodder for cattle. By its culture the farmer makes use of land otherwise unproductive; and so greatly purifies and fertilises the soil as to prepare it for a crop of barley, or other plants, such as clover; and this again becomes an excellent preparation for the planting of wheat.

In speaking to you of an English farm-house, I can form an opinion from personal observation. Its situation is almost always chosen with taste, as well as with regard to utility. Cleanliness and cheerfulness reign throughout all that compose the establishment; every part announces order and regularity. Before the house is a well-kept court, through which you pass; here is no enormous dunghill, no holes

filled with fœtid water and mud, which you are obliged to take pains to avoid in order to get into the doorway. At the windows of the English farm are hung snow-white curtains, seen through the bright, well-cleaned panes; which windows are frequently adorned outside with pots of flowers. The steps which lead up to the house are of stone: upon the upper one you perceive a man of square-built, robust form, standing firm and upright; he has on a large shooting-jacket of grey cloth, leather gaiters which reach to his knees, an ample waistcoat descending lower than his hips, into the pockets of which his hands are thrust, playing with the shillings and half-crowns with which they are well-filled.

This is the farmer himself, and on his face you again read the English device, — "an Englishman's house is his castle." His whole appearance announces ease of circumstances, and tranquillity of life. He salutes you merely by a movement of the head, slightly touching his hat at the same moment; but it is with

great civility that he asks you to "walk in," and introduces you into his parlour. You find this room furnished very simply; but great nicety, and even taste, accompany this simplicity. The floor, which soap and the scrubbing-brush have rendered almost white, is covered with a carpet in the middle; the table in the centre has also a cloth on it; the one at the side, the blue tea-service, the glasses, &c.

Soon the luncheon arrives; it is composed of an excellent ham cured at home, fresh butter just come out of the dairy, home-made bread, a glorious tankard of beer, with foaming froth falling over the edges.

But I have lost the thread of my history, —I have abandoned the subject of my letter, — "education and agriculture;" for, whilst speaking of the country, I have involuntarily strayed back to my shooting excursions, and to the frank hospitality that I have so often received from the English farmers on such occasions.

This absence of mind, however, gives me

the opportunity of paying another debt of gratitude in acknowledging kindnesses that are still not forgotten. I will also profit by it to close my letter.

Adieu!

LETTER XLV.

The English Sailor.—The Royal Navy.—The Naval Captain.—Critical Situation.—Presence of Mind.—Sailors ashore.—A Sailor Convict.—Stoicism.

I HAVE only one more purely English character to depict for you; and if I have reserved it for nearly the last of my letters, it is because I think it the most interesting and original of any England can boast. He is her natural support; it is on him that the wealth and power of the nation repose; in a word, it is the brave English sailor.

To an iron constitution he unites great bodily strength, and a bravery that no perils can shake: his habits of mind and body enable him to support all sorts of privations and

sufferings; to brave the tempests as well as the enemy's cannon; to be formidable in the fight, but gentle and generous when that fight is over. And if to these qualities you add the most entire devotedness for the maintenance of his country's honour, a great veneration for his king, (who is always supposed to be present on the deck of an English vessel,) a constant gaiety and originality of mind, a carelessness of money when he receives his pay after a long cruise, and an air of superiority over all who are mere landsmen,—you will find in the English sailor a being apart from all others, and one full of interest under whatever circumstance or form you may consider him.

The geographical situation of England, and the great extension of her commerce, demand a naval force out of all proportion with that of any other country; and consequently the field of emulation there, (if I may so express myself,) is larger and more open, the opportunities for stimulating the dispositions and

faculties necessary to a mariner more frequent. It must also be observed that a great portion of the population lives in towns on the sea-coast, upon the lengthened shores which this island describes; thus the tastes, habits, and ideas of a great part of the people are naturally directed to subjects regarding navigation and a sea life. I think the width of shoulder and great strength of most Englishmen, particularly of the race of which I speak, may be attributed to the national taste for rowing; not only is this taste common to the lower, but to the upper and fashionable class.

Without depreciating the great importance of the merchant service, or that of the Army, the "Royal Navy" is considered in England the first in rank as well as the highest in importance. In order to form a tolerably just idea of the experience and qualifications of those who compose it, you should read attentively the journals kept on board, or rather the books which daily appear, describing the cruises and voyages of different vessels, written

by the lieutenants or commanding officers themselves. The warmth and spirit with which droll or terrible scenes are depicted, the nobleness and dignity of sentiment which is expressed, and the sensibility even which is betrayed whilst on a service extremely severe, and continued with a discipline excessively rigid—the precision and calmness of manœuvres in the greatest dangers,—the coolness of the commander, so necessary yet so difficult to acquire, — all this will explain the superiority which the English navy has attained.

In fact, with equal forces and equal bravery, the advantage in a sea-fight must almost always be on the side of the English; because the greatest ardour or courage are nothing without that precision, skill, and experience, which years, long habit, and constant practice alone can give.

The great responsibility which devolves upon the captain when once on board, the unlimited power which is confided to him, his rapid decisions, which are as promptly obeyed as

conceived, the brief yet comprehensive language in which his orders are conveyed, the profound respect paid him by his officers and men, all entirely dependent on him, present also a character completely apart, and one which is in many cases most admirable. I will cite a passage from one of those books I mentioned in the beginning of this letter, written by a very distinguished naval officer; he is speaking of his captain: the scene described takes place at the beginning of his career, when he was still very young and held only the rank of a midshipman.

It passes on board a vessel, which, after having "run on shore" several others she had been in chase of, is surprised by a violent gale in the very bay where the other ships had been lost. In order to avoid being thrown on the shore by the wind, it is necessary at any risk to regain the high seas. The vessel is in the greatest danger, and distant only one mile from the point where the bay terminates, the cape of which she has to

double; but the heavy wet sails fall suddenly flapping in the wind, and she loses two points of her direction,—however, I will let the author speak for himself.

"The officers and seamen were aghast, for the ship's head was right on the breakers. 'Luff! now all you can, quartermaster,' cried the captain; 'send the men aft directly. My lads, there is no time for words, I am going to club-haul the ship, for there is no room to wear. The only chance you have of safety is to be cool, watch my eyes, and execute my orders with precision. Away to your stations for tacking ship! Hands by the best bower. Mr. W. attend below with the carpenter and his mates, ready to cut away the cable at the moment that I give order. Silence there, fore and aft! Quarter-master, mind you ease the helm down when I tell you.'

"The ship had closed to within a quarter of a mile of the beach, and the waves curled and topped around us, bearing us down upon the shore, which presented one continued sur-

face of foam, extending to within half-cable length of our position, at which distance the enormous waves culminated and fell with the report of thunder. The captain waved his hand in silence to the quartermaster at the wheel, and the helm was put down; the ship turned slowly to the wind, pitching and chopping as the sails were spilling. When she had lost her way, the captain gave the order, 'Let go the anchor! we will haul at once, Mr. F.' said the captain.

"Not a word was spoken, the men went to the fore-brace which had been manned; most of them knew, although I did not, that if the ship's head did not go round on the other way, we should be on shore and among the breakers in half a minute. At last the ship was head to wind, and the captain gave the signal; the yards flew round with such creaking noise, that I thought the masts had gone over the side, and the next moment the wind had caught the sails; and the ship, which for a moment or two had been on an even keel, careened her over to

the gunnel with its force. The captain, who stood upon the weather hammock rails, holding by the main-rigging, ordered the helm a-midships; looked full at the sails, and then at the cable which held the ship from nearing the shore. At last he cried, 'Cut away the cable!' A few strokes of the axes were heard, and then the cable flew out of the hawse-hole in a blaze of fire, from the violence of the friction, and disappeared under a huge wave, which struck us on the chess-tree, and deluged us with water fore and aft. But we were now on the other side, and the ship regained her way, and we had evidently increased our distance from the land.

"'My lads,' said the captain to the ship's company, 'you have behaved very well, and I thank you;' and beckoning to the master to follow him, he went down into his cabin.

"'By the powers! it was as nate a thing as ever I saw done,' observed O'B. 'The slightest mistake as to time or management, and at this moment the flatfish would have been dub-

bing at our ugly carcases. Peter ! you 're not fond of flat-fish, are you, my boy ?' "

I now return to my simple sailors. Nothing is more amusing than to meet them on land, travelling either on foot or by a stage-coach ; which latter only occurs, as you may suppose, when they have just received their pay or prize-money. They are then in great joy, and full of jokes and fun, practised upon their companions, or upon all they may happen to meet on their road. Their great pleasure is to act as if they had converted the top of the stage-coach into the deck of a vessel ; and, notwithstanding the velocity of its motion, they frequently stand upright on it, at the risk of breaking their necks, or of falling, as they say, " overboard,"—which is more likely to happen, as they *refresh themselves* at every pot-house, and at length finish by seeing every object *double.*

When the coach stops at an inn, the sailor cries out, " I say, you pewter-carrier, bring another pint of ale." This is addressed to the waiter, whose business it is to serve the public

carriages. He quickly obeys, and brings a pewter-pot full of beer. Jack drinks half, and throws the rest in his face, asking at the same time, "What 's to pay?" "Fourpence, sir," says the waiter, wiping his face, and not daring to show his anger, lest he might not get an extra penny for himself. The sailor, still perched upon the top of the coach, thrusts his large hand into his breeches-pocket and pulls out a handful of bank-notes, shillings, and halfpence mixed together; and, just as he is on the point of giving more than his demand, the impatient coachman sets off: the sailor then quietly puts his money back into his pocket, saying, "There 's cut and run;" then, turning to a young traveller seated by his side, he says "That 's what you 'll learn to do, my joker, before you have been two cruises at sea."

The stage-coachmen generally take in good part all the annoyances that may arise from these turbulent companions; indeed, they may be considered as the spoilt children of the whole nation. Sometimes you will see half a dozen of

them at a time climbing, with all the agility of their profession, on one of these public coaches, without the coachman pulling up his horses for them; he is sure, he says laughingly, soon to get rid of them; and indeed, by the time he arrives at the place where he is to change horses, perhaps there remains only one or two, all the others being left sprawling on the road.

If you would like a contrast to this picture, I will show you the English sailor under solemn circumstances, but still with the same indifference. The fact related in the following anecdote really occurred.

A sailor was brought as prisoner before a court, accused of a crime punishable with death. It is not by a court-martial that he is to be judged, but by a common criminal court. During the whole of the sitting, and during a trial where his life is at stake, he exhibits the greatest tranquillity of demeanour, and an indifference which astonishes the whole assemblage. His counsel makes every effort to save him—but in vain! The judge receives the decision

of the jury, and places on his head the fatal black cap,—a sign that he is going to pronounce the terrible sentence of death! Jack remains perfectly unmoved! He hears the words resound in his ears,—"Condemned to be hung until he be dead!" The only movement he makes is to take his quid of tobacco out of his mouth and put it on the other side! No mark of agitation or grief appears on his countenance! The judge, surprised and almost angry at such stoicism, asks him in a loud voice if he has comprehended the sentence?

"Surely I did, my lord," he replies. "But, miserable sinner," cries out again the judge, "do you know that you are going to die, loaded with a horrible crime, and that you will go to hell! and burn there to all eternity?"

"Well, my lord," says the sailor, "I hope I shall be able to bear it."

Farewell, my dear Augustus.

LETTER XLVI.

Recreations.—Statesmen.—Contrast.—Statesmen in France.—Pompous Ambassador.—Mortified Arrogance.—Mr. Canning.—A modest man.

The calmness and reserve which I have said the English like to preserve even in their domestic relations, as well as in society, does not prevent them, however dignified they may be, from taking part in recreations and pleasures which, although perfectly irreproachable in point of morality, yet appear rather trifling when compared to the functions and characters of those engaged in them.

If you were newly arrived in England, and yet unacquainted with the usages of the country, you would, I think, be surprised at learning

from the newspaper, (where all the goings and comings of the great and fashionable are minutely detailed,) that the prime minister, a noble duke perhaps, is going on a shooting excursion into the country, on a visit to the Marquis of ——, killing every day his fifty pheasants: or again, that some other important political personage will "run his hounds," on such a day, at such an hour, and in such a place; this is an advertisement, understood by all amateurs, that at the time indicated there will be a fox-hunt.

I would not have you disapprove of this, my dear Augustus; nor even that the honourable baronet who passed the greater part of yesterday, and even of last night, in discussing the most serious affairs of the nation in the House of Commons, shall appear to-day in Hyde Park, mounted on a beautiful blood-horse, dressed nearly like a dandy, and followed by the smallest of tigers. I myself am far from blaming this; for, to speak to you frankly, (of course in the strictest confidence!) I will ac-

knowledge that I would accept the presidency of the ministry of Great Britain myself if I was sure of enjoying the reward that the noble duke does when he goes on his shooting excursions!

My object at present is only to place before your eyes the differences that appear to me to exist between the French and English, considered in similar positions, and supporting the same characters. Let it be understood besides, that, notwithstanding the good or bad compliments I may distribute to the right or left, I do not mean in anywise to alter the opinion with which I have tried to imbue you in my first letters respecting the English people; there I considered them *en masse*, here I speak of individuals and small portions of society.

Without pretending to say that a minister in France would be openly censured if he sometimes suffered himself to enjoy such recreations and pleasures, it is nevertheless true that it would not appear so simple and natural as it does in England. For instance, at Paris, could you imagine, without laughing, Mr. T. with his

spectacles on his nose, in a shooting-jacket, and with his gun in his hand? Or fancy another grave personage, in a pair of leathern breeches and top-boots, engaged in fox-hunting, leaping over hedges and ditches. I do not think, among all the various presidents of the Chamber of Deputies, that there has ever been one since its creation who has had the least pretension to the character of a sportsman; whilst in England, the right honourable gentleman who a few months ago was Speaker of the House of Commons, has the reputation of being a great lover of all kinds of sport, and is "a very good shot." Perhaps the inequality of fortune has something to do with these differences, but I believe there is still more in natural tastes and habits.

With the least worldly experience, it is easy on the Continent to recognise an ambassador, or any other great personage; they never relinquish their character for a moment, they always keep their *gros bonnets*, and they besides generally announce themselves by their too great pompousness and too little simplicity of man-

ner. Among the English of a like rank, it is just the contrary. Not only do they like in society to put aside all distinctions arising from their places or situations, (remark, I do not speak of titles or riches,) but they even discard the exterior marks of those distinctions, such as crosses, ribands, stars, &c., which they never wear but in great ceremonies or fêtes, when it is necessary for them to be so adorned.

Some years ago, at Paris, I was at a concert at the Duchess de R's. The music-room was crammed with fine ladies, among whom were several English of rank and fashion; those who had succeeded in penetrating the apartment were standing closely packed against the walls, whilst a group of others entirely filled up the doorway; I was one among the latter. While we occupied the post, the name of a very great personage was announced; he was a proud ambassador of that day, of whom a punster said, his name was full of *o*, and his person of *r* (airs). His excellency finding that none of us disturbed ourselves to let him pass, but re-

mained with our eyes fixed on the admirable songstress*, who was then enchanting all ears, began gently pushing his way, but the party was too strong against him. Among them were several officers, who were certainly not accustomed to receive the enemy in the rear; and this did not render the passage easier for him. He then tried the effect of two or three *hum! hum!* to which one of us, a true *dilettante*, without turning his head, answered by a prolonged *chut!* which at last put an end for the moment to his excellency's pretensions, and he was obliged to wait until the air was finished. We all of us knew his haughtiness; and a little hint, which had passed from one to the other on hearing him announced, had prepared this lesson for him.

Since that time, I have seen in London, under circumstances almost exactly similar, a person of greater importance even than this great ambassador, after refusing to take advantage of the passage offered him, quietly seat himself in the

* Madame M. Fodor.

ante-room until the piece of music was finished. You will perhaps object to me that it was his indifference to music which made him act thus; but you are mistaken, for he is known as a great connoisseur and even amateur performer; and it is much more probable that he was actuated by the fear or aversion which almost every Englishman feels to attract the eyes and attention of a whole saloon upon him; it was just the contrary feeling that induced *Mr. l' Ambassadeur* to try to make his way through a crowd of people perfectly silent, listening to a charming voice; he would in such a case have entered with full effect.

I remember another instance: it was the first time I ever saw Mr. Canning; and you will permit me to remark that in his single person he was of more importance than the whole of the diplomatic corps of which my ambassador made one. It was at a ball, (at Mr. de Ch——d, then the French representative at the English court,) that I saw him whose premature death has since plunged his whole country

in grief, and whose loss has been deplored by every civilized nation. He was modestly seated in a corner, half concealed behind the door of the great room, where all the gay people were assembled ; and, seeming to listen to the person with whom he was conversing, he occasionally passed and repassed his hand upon that noble and elevated forehead which added such expression to his physiognomy ; and, far from appearing to seek by a proud exacting look the attention and respectful bows of those around him, he kept his eyes lowered and fixed on the ground. For him the ball, the brilliant fête had disappeared, and he was sunk in one of his grand and generous contemplations, in which was involved the honour and happiness of a whole nation !

There are two other things for which distinguished men in England have a great aversion ; first, the profound bows of most Continental nations and any decided compliments personally addressed to themselves. Like a conjuror, I have always my sack in reserve in

which I keep my examples; I will give you one in illustration of this remark.

The gentleman to whom I am about to allude, was of one of the most ancient families; but he possessed a still higher title to distinction than that bestowed by birth and situation, — he was member of several learned societies, and endowed with the greatest talent and full of scientific knowledge. I will call him Mr. C., as his family name begins with that letter. Besides the aversion to be noticed, of which I spoke above, he was peculiarly *shy*,— a negative English quality with which I have already made you acquainted. Well then, to my story: at a rather large "réunion," where Mr. C. had found his modest corner, and was talking, as he thought, secure from intrusion, one of his friends came to him, and, without any preface, presented him to a foreigner, a learned German, who desired "with the greatest ardour" to make his acquaintance. Mr. C., already quite confused to find himself face to face with this foreigner, arose; and the latter,

after making him two or three profound bows, and giving him no time to recover himself, commences with

"Sir! I have travelled several thousand miles, from the further parts of Germany, in order to have the happiness of contemplating in you one of the greatest geniuses and one of the most learned men of the age!"

So saying, he renewed his bows, and, on lifting up his head, to his great surprise found no one before him; Mr. C. had disappeared. After remaining for some moments as if stupified, and without saying a word, he had turned his back to his complimenter, and ran home to lock himself up in his room, and only there recovered his respiration.

LETTER XLVII.

Paltry Ambition.—Pretensions of Footmen.—Costume.—Ridiculous Pride.—Contrasts.—Affected Condescension.—Undue Pretension.

AFTER the compliments I have just been paying to the English, I cannot refrain from certain reproaches which I have now to make to a large portion of their countrymen.

Abstracting the aristocracy, who cannot pretend to a higher elevation, it is certain that every other class in England are continually endeavouring to do so; they are ever striving to quit their respective situations, and to appear richer and greater than they really are; "every one must be fine." You will find haughty airs in a London coach-maker, and in many others

besides him. The footmen even, notwithstanding those good qualities that I have often found in them, and ascribed to them elsewhere, are full of pretensions also; but theirs is to have "high wages and nothing to do;" and this is carried to such a point, that, overlooking their impudence and effrontery, you cannot help laughing at them.*

In travelling in England, properly called, in contradistinction with the other parts of the British dominions, you will never find any of the picturesque provincial dresses, the costumes general on the Continent, which are so perfectly in keeping with the lives of the peasants

* "On what terms are you willing to enter my service?" said an Englishman to a servant who offered himself in the place of one who had just been turned away.

"Why, sir, I should require fifty pounds a year, three suits of livery, my washing, my tea and sugar, and a boy for the dirty work, as boots, shoes, and cleaning the plate; also, as you know, sir, to run out on commissions when the weather is bad."

"Is that all that you want?"

"Yes, sir, that 's all."

"Then, my good friend, if you ever find such a place, I beg you will let me know, for I shall be most happy to take it myself."

who wear them, and the nature of the places they inhabit. This want of harmony makes itself more felt and regretted in the villages of England, as they are (as I have often repeated) so very pleasing in appearance and so agreeable to visit. You can hardly, however, give the name of peasants to those who inhabit them, for there is very little difference between their manner of dressing and that of the inhabitants of the great towns, except perhaps among some of the men, principally the carters, who wear a sort of long shirt which descends to the heels; and it is difficult to find anything picturesque in this accoutrement. As to the women, what would you say, accustomed as you are to the costume of our peasants, if you saw in a retired village full sleeves *à la gigot!* the same form of dress and hat, the *polisson* even, of the gaily-dressed Londoners!

From this it naturally follows, that the same peasant, with her fresh-coloured, beautiful complexion, who would look so well and be so pleasing to the eye in a garb suitable to her situation

and character, becomes heavy, ungraceful, and even vulgar in the dress of the town. It is particularly on a Sunday that this unlucky spirit of imitation is carried the furthest.

In a higher class the pretensions are still greater. No individual who would wish to pass for a gentleman would venture to carry in his hand the smallest object whatever, not even the little purchase he has just made. It is never made a question that the shopkeeper shall send it. To be seen with such a thing in the streets of London! Good God! how shocking!—it would be exposing yourself to the loss of all consideration. And yet in a higher rank this is not felt, for I recollect very well one day meeting the Duke of L. with a large music-book under his arm, which he was carrying to his lovely and amiable wife; and he could not help smiling when, on stopping to speak to me, he perceived in my hand a pottle of strawberries,—which fruit, by-the-bye, I have never eaten in such perfection as in England.

Here is another contrast: a female of that

large intermediate class called middling, (who, although she may have the title of a lady by courtesy, and may be really so in social position, yet, in this country of thousand distinctions, is nevertheless infinitely below a duke in rank,) will most carefully avoid taking in her hand out of her own carriage, when it stops at her own door, the most trifling parcel — not even the riband she may have just bought. It would be vulgar to do so: it is the footman who is expected to collect all the little purchases together, forgotten expressly in the carriage; and it is he who gives them to the maid, who deposits them on her mistress's toilet.

Continuing my contrasts, for which, you will perceive, I have a particular weakness: often and often in England, upon being presented to women of the first rank, I have seen them rise from their chair, and receive me in the kindest and politest manner; whilst, from simple gentlewomen, all I have been honoured with was an inch or two of ascension. If I descend still lower, it will be still more striking; for

instance, I met a lady one day in a country-house; she had just arrived in a superb equipage, attended by two footmen armed with large gilt-headed canes. She was, like me, paying a morning visit. I was introduced to her,—a ceremony which is inevitable in such a case,—although unasked by me; my very reserved bow was, to my great surprise, answered by a "nod" of so protecting a nature that I could not but imagine that this lady was a princess incognita. But I was soon undeceived, for some one told me shortly afterwards that my princess was the wife of a wholesale dealer, who possessed a considerable fortune, a fine estate and house in the country, hunters, hounds, a famous preserve, &c. Since I have better comprehended the complicated combinations of the English society, I have been able to understand that these were the causes of the little bow with which the lady deigned to honour me.

I could give you many more examples of this general desire among the English of

appearing greater, richer, happier, and more amused than they really are, and of all the sacrifices that are made to give rise to that belief in others; but I will leave for another letter my further reflections on this subject, and the comparison of these usages with those of France.

And then, my good friend, I shall have done, and together we shall say adieu to England.

Good-b'ye!

LETTER XLVIII.

Middle Classes in France.—The English Waiter.—English and French Officers.—Army Discipline.—Military Rank.—Adieu to England.

Am I not right when I say that every man in France who follows an honourable profession or employment, such as that of a merchant, a tradesman, &c. knows how to keep his proper place?—at least, that it is very rare to find any one in this very considerable class who ever thinks of giving himself airs,—of trying to pass for a gentleman? Is it not also true, that an artist in our country is always willing to remain such, and does not seek to be any other? that he is even proud of his quality on its own account? If you meet him in society, where he is always well received, do not his opinions, enthusiastic

as they are apt to be, always declare what he is, what is the art to which he is devoted? And then the physician—you may immediately recognise him by his reserved and peculiar manners; even his dress is distinct.

There is also nothing more regular, more fixed, than the manner of existence of that large number of individuals living on their moderate incomes, whom we call *bourgeois*. This designation, which from age to age has remained unaltered, is a proof that the people who come under it are unchanged; and that, although sometimes ridiculed by the other classes, they themselves continue attached to their condition. Let us pass from this to a higher class, the one which corresponds to that of the gentility in England. There is a great similitude in both, in the manner of living, in the occupations and amusements, in the education, and many other particulars too tedious to enumerate; but as soon as I arrive at the point in view, "the pretensions above their position in life," I have immediately occasion to renew my observation about the

English. I do not, however, think they have much cause to complain of me. It is certain that persons composing this sort of society in France rarely aspire (like the same ranks in England) to an association with the nobility. They keep to themselves, and desire not to attain a sphere superior to their own in point of rank; I do not believe they even care anything about it. They do not, like the greater part of the middling class in England, pretend to the possession of coats of arms and crests, bearing proud devices in Latin, to prove to every one that they are of high lineage, and descended from distinguished ancestors.

But from among the divers conditions of the two countries, which may serve as examples, will you condescend to follow me into a *café* or *restaurant*, in order to remark the waiter—"*le garçon.*" He is always ready at his post; not only prepared, but happy to preserve his character. He never quits it; you see him always in his short blue vest, with his clean white apron. This costume says openly, "I

am the waiter;" and he proves his vocation by his readiness and promptitude of obedience to the never-ending calls made on him. Now look at his parallel on the other side of the channel, "the waiter at a coffee-house."—Heaven preserve you from the dinner that he will bring you! Instead of the vest and apron, the natural and descriptive emblems of his condition, he assumes the black coat, black waistcoat, and black trousers, that out of doors he may appear something more than the servant of a tavern; but it is all so threadbare, so shabby, that he looks more like an undertaker than anything else: and what renders the likeness more true is, that it is into one of the little dismal half-l ' d partitions, (almost like coffins,) of which the interior of a coffee-room is composed, that he introduces you, where, in solitude and silence, you may devour like a wild beast the enormous slice of half-dressed beef that he presents to you, and which is streaming with blood.

Now, will you leap with me from the low re-

gion into which I have made you descend, up to the height where the English officer stands? Here I have an observation to make with the same intent, that of pointing out the difference of habits in the same rank of life in the two countries, without at all venturing on delicate ground, or meaning to give offence anywhere; for I am not going to discourse upon glory, bravery, or any of those fine things foreign to my present purpose. My observations will only be made upon the manners and appearance in the world of English and French officers.

I will suppose you quite ignorant of the customs of the two countries, not even knowing the difference of uniform which distinguish the respective armies. We are at a *levée* at St. James's, or at Windsor; or, if you like it better, at a royal *fête* on the Continent; but where every one is required to be in uniform, and where there is a mixture of French and English officers.

Well, here we are! I point out to you two

officers conversing in a friendly way together: one is dressed very plainly in a dark-coloured uniform, with small epaulettes made of twisted silver thread; his hat ornamented in an equally unostentatious manner. The other has thick gold lace on his sleeves, on his coat-collar, behind and before. His uniform is of a bright colour; his epaulettes are also of gold, in large twists, and equal in size to those you are accustomed to see on shoulders of a general in your own country. Both of them are young. A third officer approaches; he is much older, his breast is covered with orders and ribbons. When he joins the two friends, one of them assumes a respectful attitude, and inquires with a bow after the health of "*mon général*;" whilst the other extends his hand, saying, "How are you, general?"

Well, I ask if you can guess the rank of the two officers; I myself know them both. You smile that I should suppose you can have any doubt on the subject, and with great assurance (which, by-the-bye, is what the English

reproach us for,) you reply, "*Parbleu!* that's not difficult: the officer in the plain uniform is at the most a French lieutenant, I heard him speak French; and the other, the Englishman, who said 'How are ye?' is a colonel at least, if he is not a general."

And you stop quite satisfied with your sagacity. But I interpose with my experience, and in this case my certainty that you are quite mistaken. The French officer, I tell you, is a captain-commandant in a regiment of light cavalry; and the English one is a lieutenant in the ——fusileers.

Here I must give you a few words of explanation. In the English army, when not "under arms," discipline (severe enough) gives way to the distinctions of the world,—at least to a certain point there is no distance between officers of different military grades, but only what may exist from courtesy, age, or title; whilst in France, although certainly there is less rigidity than when in the field or on parade, still there is always a strong line of demarcation main-

tained between such and such an epaulette. But, although this last remark is in accordance with my general theme, yet it has not so particular a relation with the subject of this letter; whilst that of the great difference in the appearance and manner of the two officers I have exhibited, exactly accomplishes my object of showing you that the desire in England is general of appearing higher than in reality one is placed; and consequently, in the English army, as the officers of low rank wear immense epaulettes, and affect perfect ease with those of the greatest rank, so I am right in comprehending them in my observation.

From what I have said, and the examples I have given you, you will I think arrive with me at the conclusion that the lightness and frivolity of character which is often imputed to the French by the English themselves, might in these cases be reversed. There is dignity and philosophy, as well as a sort of courage, in being satisfied with the lot of life which has fallen to you; and I believe this quality to be real and

very remarkable in the French character. The result is still more curious than the fact itself, and quite different from what might be expected:—namely, that in England, where almost every one tries to appear greater than he is, yet the ranks are distinct and immovably fixed; whilst in France, where no one seems to think of the place he holds, they are intermixed by an infinity of slight gradations.

But I have done! Adieu, then, England! adieu! I take leave of your beautiful meadows and well-cultivated fields, of your magnificent trees, your gardens, your parks, your perfumed hedges, your charming villages, your smooth and highly valued roads, winding so gracefully and picturesquely as if in search of every beautiful site. Adieu! This is my summer farewell! But, adieu also to the dim light of the winter day!—to the towns uncheered by a single ray of the sun! Adieu to fogs, damp, and sadness!

Adieu also to the reign of aristocracy! to lords, right honourables, &c. Adieu to the

finished but cold politeness; to the sumptuous assemblies, where luxury and magnificence shine unrivalled, but where ease and pleasures make way for stiff etiquette!

Good-b'ye to you also, plain John Bull! with whom I have not had much acquaintance, but still sufficient to convince me that your good and solid qualities more than counterbalance your defects! Adieu! continue to keep your healthy, full, round face, although your nose be rather red! keep also your sturdy habits, your long pipe, and the dear pot of beer!

By Jove! you form one of the happiest portions of the English community!

Adieu even to you, beggars of England! you who, in your misery, seem still to feel shame in asking alms openly and publicly, and entreat assistance in a low and constrained voice, as if you feared to be heard or seen!*

And you, gipsies! why shall I not say adieu to you? I had nearly forgotten you, but the

* If the law which prohibits begging, for fear of the police, is the cause of this apparent reserve for timidity, it shows the utility and comfort of the institution.

mention of poverty and misery has recalled you to my memory. Are you not beings quite apart from all others? A distinct tribe, wandering by chance amongst a civilized, grand, and powerful people! Are you not without parish, without asylum, without any refuge but the little wooden house on wheels, with its one window and door and chimney, drawn by one poor old horse?

How I liked to meet with you in the narrow green lanes, sheltered under the high hedge, or encamped on the borders of a solitary wood! The poor horse then set at liberty, seeking his own nourishment on the adjacent turf; and the family having left their moving home, and spread on the ground their rags and miserable household utensils, are seated round the low fire of burning faggots or furze, over which was placed the boiling pot, supported on three cross sticks, in which the simple and often wretched meal was cooked.

And when you perceived me, a young girl would quit your group; and, as she smilingly

approached me, exhibiting a superb row of teeth, whose whiteness was but the more striking from the contrast with her sunburnt visage, she would fix upon me her black and piercing eyes, in which was mingled an expression of gaiety, cunning, and suffering; and, asking for my hand, would offer to tell my fortune! I heartily pardon you for deceiving me, or rather for pretending to be deceived yourselves, when you predicted happiness to me! One source alone of satisfaction at least I possess in the recollection of the few moments of pleasure that I secured to you when I bestowed my extravagant half-crown! Your prophecy is accomplished in this feeling alone!

Farewell and thanks to the few clergymen that I have known and valued, for their benevolence and kindness towards me! And to one especially, thanks for the balm he shed on my suffering heart in the day of affliction! Adieu to the finest of all moral characters, the faithful and real English clergyman!

And now, adieu to the whole English nation!

Adieu to their industry, energy, and constant activity, exercised without noise, bustle, or loss of time and words! Adieu to their humanity to animals, to their generosity in never combating with a fallen foe! Adieu to their regularity in performing their religious duties, to their modesty and decency of conduct in private and public, which in itself places them above every other people! Here, at least, the observer may follow them with the eye everywhere, into their towns, their villages, into every place which they inhabit, without ever feeling that disgust which, in so many other countries, almost obliterates the admiration and interest that would be otherwise felt!

To you, my dear Augustus, no adieu,

Mais "au revoir!"

SKETCHES

OF

MANNERS, FIELD SPORTS, &c. IN FRANCE.

Just at the moment that the translation of the preceding letters was ready for publication, some English friends of the author proposed to him to make a few remarks on France, choosing those subjects which present the strongest contrast to English habits or manners, as treated of in the foregoing pages.

CHAPTER I.

Morning Visits in France.—Madame H.—Her bon-mot.—Beautiful Invalid.—A French Sleeping-room.

I SHALL perhaps run the risk of wounding the modesty, or at least of shocking the ears, of certain strict English women, when I say that there are examples of intimacy in France, which warrant ladies in receiving visits from men in their bed-rooms, nay, even when they are still in bed! But in relating this fact, which from my own experience I know to be by no means of rare occurrence, I shall represent it in its real light, and show the object of this habit; and I think that, even to the apprehension of the English reader, I shall remove all appearance of want of modesty and disregard of decency.

As an example, I will cite a Parisian lady whom I particularly well remember,—Madame H., a woman of great talent and information, endowed also with that knowledge of the world which makes use of all those shades necessary to be observed in society, and which as much particularises the woman *comme il faut* as the most refined education. This lady also well knew how to appreciate the luxury that her large fortune procured for her, and she habitually received her friends in this manner every morning. It is true, she was not surprised

> ———" Dans le simple appareil
> D'une beauté qu'on vient d'arracher au sommeil."*

Far from it, without being a pretty woman, she possessed the advantages of an agreeable and expressive countenance; this countenance appeared ornamented with a nightcap too fresh and well arranged to allow of the supposition of its having been slept in. A cashmere shawl was negligently thrown over the shoulder, showing a bedgown of dazzling whiteness,

* In the simple apparel of a beauty just roused from her slumbers.—(From Voltaire.)

trimmed with lace, as was also the downy pillows which served to support her in her half-reclining position. Upon the thick quilted silk counterpane before her were strewed, half open, letters and notes that she had just received, the morning papers, and new pamphlets.

Arm-chairs placed around her, but at a respectful distance, were occupied by those who came to offer their homage. Amongst them were often strangers of distinction; I could mention by name two English gentlemen and one noble lord. It is natural to think that these gentlemen enjoyed passing an hour or two in a sanctuary which in England no mortal dares profane; for the conversations were full of tact and good sense, touching upon everything that was passing in society, either at the court or in the private drawing-room, in the political, literary, theatrical, or scientific world.

Madame H. had the talent of enlivening the dialogue by an infinity of bons-mots, &c.; and it appeared as if this sort of adoration offered her, as if she were on her throne, in-

spired her still more than usual. She possessed in great perfection that quality which is called *wit* in England. I cannot help giving here one of those clever sarcasms which she had the art of applying so happily and readily. But this did not occur in the bed-chamber; the individual upon whom she now exercised her power was not honoured enough to be received there; it took place in a drawing-room one evening.

Figure to yourself one of those disagreeable beings which the usages of society occasionally compel one to associate with; a vulgar-looking, short, thick man, egoistical, ignorant, abrupt, coarse in word and action, talkative beyond bearing, and, to sum up all, displaying in all his tastes and opinions, habits and gestures, a striking resemblance to the unclean animal whose name even one objects to mention. He was deafening the company with an uninteresting history of his youth, to which there seemed no hope of termination, when Madame H., interrupting him, with one phrase rendered him mute: "*Ah! mon cher*," said she, "*vous voulez dire quand vous étiez*

marcassin." * This was said in a gentle and rather drawling tone, with a most peculiar smile, and thus she saved us the end of the tiresome history.

I will only cite one more example of this practice; not that I mean to affirm that it is universal amongst French women,—God forbid! for I know many and many who, on no account, would permit a similar intrusion: still the practice is frequent. The scene now will be changed to the country, at about thirty miles from Paris, in the chateau of Count ——, celebrated for his attachment to the *grand homme* amongst the guests. There was a lady, who also received in this manner her friends, like her visitors in the house: this was, however, when she was indisposed and kept her room; but, as she was in very delicate health, the occasions were not very unfrequent.

This case I will allow is not so *unattackable* as the first-mentioned one; I shall not wonder even that certain severe ladies under whose eye this page may fall will knit their brows, and

* Oh! my dear, you mean when you were a young boar!

look grave; for I must confess that after penetrating into this charming place of repose, no instruction, no conversation, no political news, no *wit*, nothing of this sort, was to be expected.

A gentle entrance, on tip-toe, over the thickly-carpeted room, brought you to the bedside, where your inquiries were made in a low voice, and, after a few words of courtesy, you retired with the same precaution; not however before you had time (at least I always found it) to remark, even by the half light which the pink-lined window curtains spread over the room, and all its elegant furniture, under the ample folds of the bed-curtains, a lovely face, with languishing blue eyes, adorned with an elegant cap and profasion of Mechlin lace covering the whole of the dress that was to be seen. The sheet, quite freshly put on, was of the finest cambric, also trimmed with splendid lace, and covered the bed from the foot up to the dimpled chin of the beautiful *invalide*. Not far from the bed was the prettiest of fancy tables, covered with essence-bottles, a novel,

and a treasure of a basket or box containing several costly embroidered perfumed handkerchiefs, &c.

You would then receive a few amiable and flattering words in reply to your inquiries after her health, or an intimation of how pleased she would be when returned to health to renew her musical exercises with you, or still more her rides on horseback in the pretty woods surrounding the house: again an enchanting smile, and another languid regard, repaid you for your polite attention.

Since we are on the subject of the magnificence of the sleeping-rooms of the ladies in France, I cannot resist giving a little description of another that I greatly admired. It was that of the Duchess de B. at Paris, (shé, I regret to say, has now been dead some years,) but who was celebrated for her beauty, and majestic height and form, at the imperial court, and long afterwards. I now hope to smooth the wrinkled brows of my fair English reader, when I tell her that this lady never received visits when in bed, but only allowed a few intimate friends to

visit her bed-room as a matter of curiosity or pleasure.

It is not necessary to detail the usual furniture of a sleeping-chamber, the silk hangings, the gilding, the glasses—the magnificence of the furniture; but I will mention what I think will strike even those so accustomed, as the English are, to splendour in their receiving-rooms, contrasted by the simplicity of their apartments destined to repose. The back of the alcove in which stood the superb bed of the Duchess, was formed of one entire plate of glass, pure and transparent, partly covered with the green satin curtains of the bed, through which you perceived a charming bathing-room in marble, ornamented with very pretty and graceful statues. When the occupant of the bed wished to make use of this luxury, she had only to touch a spring, and the glass disappeared and gave her entrance by one step into her bath. The night lamp, which shed its softened light over this pretty scene, was contained in a vase of alabaster of exquisite workmanship, and was suspended from the ceiling.

CHAPTER II.

Hunting Party.—Battues.—Preparations for the Boar-hunt.—Hunting in the Forest.

It may appear strange to leap at one bound from the elegantly furnished bed-room, made visible by the temperate light of an alabaster lamp, into the midst of a party engaged in hunting the wolf or wild boar in a sombre forest of France: but so it is; as each subject presents itself to my mind, I write without premeditation.

I must, however, beg the reader's indulgence for this want of the regularity prescribed to authors (a name by-the-bye to which I do not aspire): but what more particularly induces me

to enter upon this description is, my knowledge that these two species of animal, as well as that of the wild roebuck, are totally unknown in England as game; and that, therefore, the manner in which we hunt them might amuse or interest the English sportsman.

The taste for hunting in France is almost extinct; there are so very few fortunes sufficiently large to keep up what was formerly called a complete equipage,—the hounds, the huntsmen, whippers-in, horses, &c. The late Duke de Bourbon was the only person who maintained one; perhaps there are but few besides who could afford it. In these days, when the object is the destruction of a wolf, or wild boar, or wild roebuck, it is always done simply by *battues*, or by a few hounds put upon their scent, and a few shots. I will first give a short sketch of the usual preparations for this sport; supposing always a property of sufficient extent, and woods of sufficient importance, to attract and retain such species of game. I must also have the *country-house*, (for of castles and lords,

France is now pretty nearly denuded,) where lives a plain simple proprietor, who shall be a lover of sports, and who shall have asked a few friends to partake its pleasures with him.

In the morning, before daybreak, one of the gamekeepers goes on the ground, choosing those places in which he thinks it most likely that game will be found. He takes a bloodhound in leash, who precedes him, with his nose close to the ground, that he may discover, by the fineness of his scent, the impression of the foot of the wolf or the wild boar: as soon as this end is attained, the gamekeeper, perceiving this trace by the soft and generally humid earth which forms the paths of the woods, ascertains to what animal it belongs; he judges from it of its age and strength, and then places two light branches across the mark, and this is called a *brisée*.

To make myself better understood, I must premise that woods in France (I do not speak of the larger forest) are always divided into portions or irregular squares, more or less ex-

tensive, which are marked out by the paths which encompass them.* So, when the keeper has taken cognisance of the trace, showing by its direction into what square the animal has penetrated, he then goes all round it by the path with his hound, and if he does not find the same track issuing from the wood before he comes round to the *brisée*, he concludes with certainty that the animal is within *à la reposée*, which means that he is lying down in that portion of the wood; and his experience tells him that he will not move out before the ensuing evening or night. He then makes a note of it in his book, and this he repeats until he obtains, as he would say, "a good provision." At last,

* This manner of division easily explains how the proprietors of woods in France annually receive their revenues from them. Supposing that a man possesses 1,000 acres, he will divide them into ten portions, and cut one every year, so that when he arrives a second time at the first portion the trees will have acquired ten years' growth, and be fit to be cut down for the different uses to which they may be destined. Trees of a better sort are reserved for separate sale, and sometimes the general cutting is retarded by five or even ten years; the distance of time is regulated by the purpose to which they are to be applied.

when he has left his *brisées*, wherever he may have seen tracks, he returns to his master at about nine o'clock—the sportsman's hour for breakfast, and presents him his tablet, which is to serve as a guide for the occupation of the day.

But, reader! if you are a real sportsman, do not be afraid that I am going to enter into a long description of so ordinary a chase; its details are already too well known, also the scene is too circumscribed, and you see too easily its beginning and end.* I will transport you to a wider theatre, one more worthy of you, one in which you shall partake of the emotions produced by a *manly sport;* it shall be to an almost impenetrable forest, no habitation within many leagues: here shall be no game-keepers, no preparation except that of your gun, and the ardour necessary to enable you to endure the fatigue you must undergo before

* Each man, with his gun, is placed in one of the foot-paths, keeping an equal distance as nearly as possible between them, and against the wind; the beaters come walking towards them from the opposite sides, or else several hounds are put upon the tracks marked by the *brisées*.

you will succeed in turning out in these almost deserted places the wolves, wild boars, or roe-bucks, which have never perhaps met the eyes or form of man, and who as yet do not know the terrible power of a cool, well-directed shot.

CHAPTER III.

Visit to Bar-le-Duc.—French Calèche.—Confines of the Forest.—Our Guides.—Silent Precautions.—The Battue.—The Sport.—Our Success.—A Wolf Shot.—His Death.—Chace of a Boar.—A Dog Killed.—Death of the Boar.—Triumphant March.—Return to Rendezvous.

Some years ago, I, and two of my friends, took the resolution of quitting Paris and its winter pleasures for the sake of a visit to Bar-le-Duc, and the contiguous forest. This town is situated at about eighty leagues from the capital. We had been much pressed to make this excursion by an old friend of ours, an ancient colonel of the *grande armée*, now fulfilling in the country a quiet, though important civil employment. He had promised to make us acquainted with all the ferocious *wild beasts* of this part of the world; the call was irresistible!

We took the mail to ourselves that we might be more at our ease, and free from the interruptions of strangers, and so off we went. If there was ample provision of guns, powder, shot, balls, and caps, there was also no want of unutterable gaiety, of cheerful friendship, and of the happy good fellowship, which I think I may with justice claim as almost peculiar to my compatriots, as well as that enviable talent of setting every one at his ease, which may be adjudged to us as one of the great advantages of social life in France.

This is not the place, and perhaps it would not become me, to depict the French character; it has already been so well estimated by able observers. Amongst them I may mention as one of the most distinguished, the clever author of "High-ways and By-ways," who has so happily depicted many of the finer shades, and remarked with so much justice and ability the peculiarities of my countrymen. The scenes that he describes, and the personages he brings into play, during his amusing pilgrimage

throughout the country, with his observations thereon, are full of talent, good-nature, and truth.

But to return to my subject: The morning after our arrival at Bar-le-Duc, where we had been most kindly and hospitably received the night before by our friend the colonel, by six o'clock,—consequently before daybreak, for it was in December,—we were all ensconced in one of those vehicles, *alas! à la Françoise*, called a *calèche* (and even such as this is rarely to be found for hire in a provincial French town); it had certainly never been touched by sponge or brush since the last century. Its colour was a composition of different shades of blue, green, and white caused by mould; the body had never once succeeded in making the springs bend since first it was suspended, and the whole machine went rumbling off on its heavy wheels in a fine style.

But what was this to us?—Which of us thought of it once?—Which of us paid the least attention to the intense cold of this winter's

morning?—Were we not going to the attack of the ferocious wolves?—of the monstrous boars?—or, more pleasing still, to try to lay prostrate one of those wild, timid roebucks, whose motions are as quick as lightning, and who often spring up to the height of eight or ten feet at one bound?

One of the heavy cart-horses, taken from the farm-yard to be harnessed to our carriage, was mounted by a long, thin old fellow, in a blue frock, with a red and white checked cotton cap on his head; this old man, shaken without mercy as he was on his hard-trotting charger, still seemed to listen with pleasure and much amusement to our jokes, laughs, and songs.

At the end of about two hours we arrived at the confines of the forest, where we found assembled by the direction of our host about twenty peasants armed with sticks and ready for the *battues*. Their clothing was far from bespeaking poverty; it was good, and protected them against the thorns and brambles they expected to meet with in the hard work in which

they were about to be engaged. They had on besides thick woollen shirts, strong iron-soled shoes, fur caps, and leathern gloves.

Amongst them were two individuals who attracted our attention more particularly; they were farmers, possessing in the neighbourhood a few fields and some acres of wood, and were renowned for their powers and great experience in this sort of sport. They were to aid us with their advice, serve us as guides, and, although dressed like peasants, they had a manner about them which distinguished them from the others. They received us cordially; one of them called to a peasant who stood near, holding in his hand a gourd filled with brandy, and offered it to us, saying, "*Buvez, messieurs, c'est du pays; cela vous réchauffera les pieds et l'estomac.*"* "Hang the man!" cried I, as I gasped after my draught, which was absolutely a dose of liquid fire; and we all three made such frightful grimaces on swallowing it, that, notwithstanding

* "Take it, gentlemen, it is of this country, and will warm your stomachs and your feet."

the pain of the burning we were suffering under, we burst into a horse-laugh that was quickly joined in by the two farmers and the villagers surrounding us.

It was with great caution and in the most profound silence that we penetrated into the forest; the peasants also had been forbidden to utter a word under the penalty of being sent back to the village, which would have been felt by them all as a disgrace. Our two guides had given us the same recommendation, observing to us, that the wolf has so fine an ear, and is so subtle and always on his guard, that he will be sensible, at an almost incredible distance, of the slightest noise made by a person in the forest, and is instantly on the alert, and steals silently and secretly away. Arrived at the point of the forest where the different cross-roads meet, the villagers took one direction and we another; we were guided by signs, all maintaining the strictest silence. We were soon placed within about two hundred paces one

from the other; one of the farmers at each extremity.

So we remained for about twenty minutes, during which I was in a state of anxious expectation! As Mr. T. was the last but one on the left, I had an opportunity of observing one of our guides; he was firmly fixed at his post, his left leg a little in advance of the other, as motionless as a statue, and with his head turned, and as immoveably fixed, towards the side from which he expected the arrival of the *batteurs*. Suddenly was heard in the distance the general halloo of the peasants; this was the sign that the *battue* had commenced. My reader will conceive the excited feelings of that moment. I had frequently partaken in wild-boar shooting before, so I was acquainted with the sound of the animal's step in the wood, of his coarse grunt of rage when wounded; but I had never been out after wolves before this, and I prayed for the chance of one. I had loaded one barrel with a ball in case of a visit from a boar, and the other with large shot to salute

the other rascally beast if he should do me a like honour.

Whilst listening to the approach of the *batteurs*, my eyes were once more directed to my neighbour on the left, and just at this moment a buck leaped over the path at one bound, close to him; he scarcely condescended even to turn his head to give him a glance, and immediately resumed his motionless attitude. I had no time to discover the reason of this indifference, I was too busily occupied with myself. A shot was now heard from the right, re-echoed by the depths of the forest, and was immediately answered by a general cheer from the *batteurs*; they approached nearer, and I recognised with joy a well-known sound,—that of the arrival of several boars from the wood. I fired at the first that passed, it was a young one; he staggered on for a few paces and then fell; but the noise of the explosion caused the rest of the band to stop: after a little, I heard them in motion again, and out they issued suddenly from the underwood close to the farmer. Here I

got a good lesson: he let the whole of the young family pass quietly; but when the enormous chief appeared, he discharged his gun, and he fell, as if struck by lightning, dead on the spot. The ball had gone through the back of the shoulder, right into the heart.

This first *battue* was now over; there had been only three shots, and each had told. The first was from one of my Paris friends, who had killed a roebuck; I had laid low my *marcassin;* and we added to our trophy the superb prey of the farmer. I went up to him, and asked him to explain to me why he had let the buck pass him without firing; he replied, that, having only a single-barreled gun, he had preferred reserving his shot for the more important piece of game.*

In the second *battue*, and those which succeeded, we went deeper and deeper into the forest. There was no chance of finding the larger game *(trouver de la grande bête)*, as

* A whole family of French peasants are nourished during the winter, in abundance, by the flesh of one of these enormous animals salted.

the peasants called it, in the vicinity of the spot that had just been beaten; their sense of hearing is too acute, and "their legs are too well stretched for that," they said; therefore each new place of attack was chosen at a considerable distance from the former one.

The whole of our day was very successful, excepting only a failure of my own. A couple of wolves, at the same time, passed almost between my legs; and, trying to have the two, I missed both. My cool friend the farmer said to me afterwards, "Ah! what a pity! for you will never have such another opportunity in all your life!" This was really turning round the poniard in the wound. However, I had the gratification in the afternoon of re-establishing, in a slight degree, my reputation, by killing a wolf; and as the peculiarities I observed when this occurred may serve to exhibit the character of this animal, I will venture to relate the circumstance.

I was at my station, half hidden behind a tree, with neck extended, and listening with

attentive ear to every sound, looking eagerly into the bushes around me, but at the same time keeping my person as still as possible. I was aware how gently, without the least sound that could be detected by the sharpest ear, a wolf could steal away; so I watched with eagerness, reckoning mostly on my good sight for a chance. After about a quarter of an hour, I perceived a head peeping out; it was indeed, that of one of those four-footed robbers, distant about twenty-five paces from me. I had learned my lesson; instead of taking aim at him, I remained perfectly still behind my tree, our two heads alone being visible. The slightest movement on my part would have caused him to retire.

After a minute spent in mutual examination, —a minute that appeared an age to me,—the brute turned his head a little on one side, as if listening to the cries of the *batteurs* who were approaching. He then gently stole forward, *at a wolf-like pace*,* almost on his belly, and thus

* A pas de loup.

presented about half his body to my view. I asked no more. I now took aim, and calmly sent him my charge of large shot. The animal sprung up, fell upon his back, and then rolled along on the ground to within a few paces of me. He was not quite dead, and now began to gnaw his own foot, and tear his own flesh, as if the blood would serve to quench his angry thirst. At this sight, compassion began to struggle in my breast with the passion and duties of a sportsman: I had still one ball in the other barrel, and I might have finished the agony of the poor beast; but with shame I confess, I thought if another wolf presented himself, or a boar came down before I should have time to reload, I should lose my chance; and then came also the promptings of vanity, —I must account for the two shots, and I should only have one piece of game to show. Happily for the tranquillity of my conscience, and still more for the poor beast, he expired whilst I debated. The fourth *battue* concluded very shortly afterwards.

I have forgotten to mention that we had several couples of hounds in reserve, belonging to the farmer I have before spoken of. These dogs are generally very inveterate against the wolf and boar; and when either of these animals are wounded, but still continues his flight, they are let loose in pursuit of him, and it is rare indeed that he escapes, so great is their determined courage and perseverance.

At about four o'clock, when the day began to decline,—(we had added another wolf and a buck to our store,)—a second boar was wounded by one of our party; he fell, but rose again, and had taken to flight in the wood; still traces of blood on the snow certified that he was severely wounded. We held a council of war whether we should give him up, or continue in pursuit of him. Notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, my friend the farmer was determined rather to pass the whole night than to lose so fine a piece. He said it was a pity to let him be devoured by the wolves. His eagerness was met by equal zeal on my part, and that of one of my

companions; the other, pleading fatigue, said he would return to the carriage, which we had left in care of some villagers, and that he would wait for us. The second farmer was a man of advanced years, and he took upon him the task of transporting the game to the village; so there only remained three persons to go in search of the wounded monster.

Four dogs, whose impatient barking testified their consciousness that their turn was now arrived to go into action, were uncoupled and put on the scent; in a very few minutes they also disappeared, and we soon heard them giving tongue joyfully. At this sound all sense of fatigue was forgotten; the cool farmer took four of the *batteurs* with us, and the conclusion of the day showed what use he intended to put them to. He recommended us not by any means to lose sight of him, for, said he, "if one of you were lost by night in this forest, the Devil himself would not get you out whole!" Thus saying, he briskly entered the wood; we followed: he, directing himself by the voice of

the dogs, and knowing well all the regular footpaths, and the passes made by the different game, rendered our course as little difficult as possible; for we had to go through high and strong brambles and thorn-bushes, and to push aside the lower branches of the trees which obstructed our passage. After half an hour's work our conductor stopped short, and listened attentively: "*Ah!*" he cried, "*les chiens le tiennent acculé quelque part; je connois ça par leur voix: courons, dépêchons-nous!*"* Quickly, however, as we obeyed, we arrived too late; the strife was over, and he was off again. The farmer was right, and we received a sad proof in the ripped-up body of one of the four dogs lying dead at the foot of a large oak, against which probably his enemy had stood on his defence.

The farmer looked at the poor brute earnestly for a few seconds, and then, stamping his foot, he exclaimed; "*S— n— de D—! tu vas me le payer.*"† Whilst speaking, he pointed to

* "The dogs have him at bay somewhere; I know that by their voice: make haste! run!"

† "S— n— de D—! thou shalt pay for this!"

the fresh and abundant traces of blood on the snow. This showed us what course to take in pursuit of the boar. He added, that he could not hold out more than another quarter of an hour; and we were at work again with renewed ardour, always guided by the indefatigable dogs. At last we got up to him; and, luckily, this was in an open part of the forest, or we could not have distinguished the scene now offered to our view. The boar was exhausted and half prostrate, but still supporting himself on his fore-legs: one dog lay dead at his feet; another was wounded, and lying disheartened a few paces off; but the fourth, *Morilo* (the farmer's favourite), was in the act of springing, all bleeding as he was, with undiminished fury, upon the dying animal. We relinquished in favour of his master the right of terminating the combat; he approached coolly within ten paces of the desperate animal, and sent a ball through his head, right between the eye, and thus finished the tragedy.

The question now was, how to transport

our heavy victim to the carriage: the foresight of the farmer came into play, it was for this purpose he had caused the four men to accompany us; luckily, the boar had made a circuit in his flight, and we had not more than a league to perform. One of the men cut down with his little hatchet a straight branch from a tree, strong enough to support the brute; the feet were crossed, and tied in that position; he was then laid on his back, and the branch passed through his legs, and two men at each extremity lifted him up with much difficulty by this rough lever. When, however, he was once placed on their shoulders, they set out with good heart, and we began our triumphant march. The two large wounds of the dog made by the tusks of the boar were dressed by the farmer, who tore up his own handkerchief for this purpose; as for *Morilo*, he, all bloody and torn, nevertheless ran joyously by the side of his master.

As soon as we found the path by which we had entered the forest in the morning,

the route became easy, but still it had long been quite dark when we arrived at the place of rendezvous. Here we left our brave guide, having prevailed on him with great difficulty to accept one of the boars. We wished him to take one of the roebucks also, but this he pertinaciously declined; he promised to be at his post early on the morrow to receive us, and then departed. We also, after leaving the necessary directions for disposing of our "killed," resumed our places in the carriage, and returned to the town.

I will postpone to the following chapter the history of the rest of our exploits, and particularly that of the great imprudence of one of my friends, which the day after put an end to our sport in the neighbourhood of Bar-le-Duc.

CHAPTER IV.

Second Day's Sport.— Shooting Foxes.— A Wounded Wolf.— His Death.

PARTICULARLY ADDRESSED TO MY FRIEND THE SPORTSMAN.

DEAR ——

THE ensuing day was but a repetition of the one just described, as far as regards the early departure, the snow, the cold, the assembled peasants, and our friend the farmer; his old companion was alone wanting. But on this second day we explored a different part of the forest; we did not confine ourselves to "*la grande bête*," as on the day preceding. This time, hares, rabbits, woodcocks, and even foxes, were to take their chance in the dance! "What?" you cry, "what! shooting foxes!" "Yes, sir, with a gun, powder, and shot!"

But wait a little, keep yourself cool until I explain the affair; permit me to remark on the extremely different manner in which we in France, and you in Great Britain, look upon this malicious, spiteful, destructive animal. In England, you have them in very small numbers in your covers (where you take care of them as spoiled children, in order to give yourselves the pleasure of hunting them to death afterwards); these covers in France would only be regarded as small woods well suited "to go nutting in," whilst in our interminable forests these gracefully long-tailed rogues abound. In these said forests there is no possibility of hunting them, mounted on beautiful high-priced horses, and dressed in fine red coats. The trees are too close and too branchy to allow a horse and horseman to penetrate between them; here are no hedges or ditches to leap over (which part of the chase, with you, is a far more important object than the fox itself); here there is no wish of breaking necks or legs even; no, with us, my dear sir, in

our villages and solitary farms, they become, from their destructiveness, a real pest which it is absolutely necessary to get rid of.

I do not, however, affirm that they are never hunted in France, but it is rare; and it is still more rare in such cases to get the good-for-nothing animal to quit the protection of the woods on these occasions; it is more than difficult to *force* one, and your only chance of killing one is by firing at him the moment he ventures to show the end of his nose from under the wood. This reminds me of a ridiculous observation that I have heard made by certain of your countrymen, on the inferiority of French foxes to those of your happy country,—"*that they do not run so fast.*" You must avow, my dear friend, that it is carrying the rage of superiority rather far when it leads to a belief that even foxes have been created (by particular favour to England) with longer legs and quicker pace than in a neighbouring country separated from it only by seven leagues of salt water!

However this may be, it is but too true that we do kill foxes in France with guns, and take them in snares and traps; so I must continue my history. In fact, I could not find a better occasion to relate an instance of the spitefulness and rage of one of these animals. Do not fear another long description of *battues*, difficulty of progress through the wood, &c. I will abstain from all this, and simply relate three incidents that occurred on this second day, and which may interest by their novelty, as it is not possible to meet with anything similar in your own country.

First. A wolf had been wounded, and got away; he was afterwards found in the wood, some two or three hundred paces distant from the place where he had been shot. He was too much exhausted to be dangerous; so, the men dragged him to the path where we were stationed, that we might examine him at our ease. He was of the largest species, and although incapable of moving, and visibly on the point of expiring, he still looked at us

with an expression of ferocity impossible to describe. The peasants, animated by the spirit of hatred that they generally feel against this animal, were cruelly beating him to death. He never uttered a single cry, not a groan; his eyes remained immoveably fixed on his destroyers, until death at last rendered them glassy and put an end to his pain! As soon as he was dead, the odour that exhaled from his body was so fœtid as to compel us to retire. Here I may as well mention, that, in those provinces where wolves are plentiful, the government allows fifteen francs, as recompense, to each person who kills a male wolf, and eighteen for a female.

Second. One of the customs adopted in these *battues* is, strictly to abstain from quitting your post, under any pretext whatever, as long as the sport continues. Notwithstanding this rule, one of my own companions (he who had given up the pursuit of the boar the evening before) fired at a fox, and, on seeing him fall and remain extended on the ground, quitted

his post to go in search of him, and, taking him by one of his hind-legs, dragged him by it after him: the beast, however, was not dead; he sprang up, and seizing the hand that was pulling him, with his sharp-pointed teeth clung firmly to it. Our friend re-appeared in the path screaming horribly, and violently trying to shake the brute off, but uselessly; his torture continued the same: I ran to his assistance, as well as the good farmer, who had also heard his cries. By this time the poor young man was prostrate on the ground, without strength, and almost senseless! We were obliged to force a piece of wood, cut down in a hurry, into the jaw of the fox, to deliver him from this torment; and, in an instant after, the head of the beast was smashed to pieces by the heel of my hero the farmer!

It was now late, and besides we could not continue our sport, for the wounded hand began to swell prodigiously; it had been completely pierced through by the fox's teeth

(rendered, we feared, venomous from the suffering he had himself undergone); and his agony was so great, that we resolved on starting immediately for Bar-le-Duc, in order to procure the prompt assistance of a surgeon. Our invalid, supported by two persons, arrived at last at the outskirts of the forest, where the carriage was in waiting; we laid him down in it, and my other friend accompanied him. In order to give him more room, I mounted a pony that the colonel had good-naturedly sent in case of our standing in need of anything.

Third. At this time I had a very pretty English spaniel that I was very fond of. (His name was Teapot—pardon this folly; I had called him thus, because, when he was quite a puppy, I used to let him get upon the breakfast-table, and he would lap the tea out of my own cup.) He had been tied up all the day, and, wishing to give him a little exercise, I unloosed him that he might run after me, as I followed the calèche at a short

distance. It was now dark, and the only light we got was from the reflection of the snow.

At about a couple of miles from the town there is a hollow in the road, the banks on each side being about ten or twelve feet in height: here I faintly perceived an animal trotting on the right side; it was too dark for me clearly to distinguish the form, and I at first thought it was a dog, but, on seeing my own little pet run close up and get between the horse's legs, I guessed that it must be a wolf, and I was right. Our guns were in their cases in the carriage; I had nothing with me but a hunting-whip; and whilst I was hesitating what I had better do, the wolf leaped down from the bank, and rushed upon my poor little dog, and tried to seize him. Teapot had always been remarkable for his agility, and numberless were the tricks I had taught him to perform. By a rapid flight on one side he escaped the fangs of his enemy, and I, clacking my whip loudly, caused the brute to retreat to his perch, where

he stood looking at us. I eagerly called to the dog, who only understood English, "Up to me! up, my boy, up!" He obeyed with wonderful alacrity, and sprang sufficiently high for me to catch him. I placed him before me on my saddle, and set off on a good round gallop after the carriage. You will scarcely believe me perhaps, but the impudent marauder continued to watch us, and followed us to the very gates of the town!

To conclude this subject, I will only add, that in several of the French provinces, in a hard rigorous winter, the wolves unite themselves in troops or flocks, and become really formidable by the ravages they commit on the inhabitants. Hunger renders them quite ferocious, and they frequently enter the villages at night. I heard it related at Bar-le-Duc, that one of these animals scratching at the door of an isolated hut, a child who was alone within opened it, and was immediately seized and carried off more than the distance of a mile by the brute, who there devoured it. Another wolf, rendered still more

ferocious by hunger during a very severe winter, entered the town one morning, and meeting with a postilion who was returning with his horses, he attacked him, and bit him so badly on the knee, that the man died mad a few days after.

CHAPTER V.

Progress of Music. — Auber, Herold, Halevy. — French Romances. — A French Singer. — Singers and Dancers. — The Pirouette. — Ridiculous Exhibition. — Albert.

PURSUING the irregular course which I permit myself in my observations, I now take as my subject a science in which the French appear lately to have made a sensible progress, — I mean that of music. This progress is evident in the improvement now so apparent in the upper classes. The Germans and Italians, by placing constantly before us so many excellent models, have succeeded at last in teaching us to understand and to feel what really is good music.

Cherubini and Paer first began this happy reformation; Auber, Herold, Halevy, have since continued it with different success. Auber, at his *début*, took a high flight, and by his first conception and execution gave us the greatest hopes for the future: I allude to his *Muette de Portici;* but, unfortunately, these hopes have not been realized. This has been followed by compositions, comparatively speaking, of only indifferent merit. Herold, the most melodious and *suave* representative of the modern school, has in three different works succeeded in gaining merited and distinguished approbation. *Zampa*, *Le Pré aux Clercs*, and *Ludovic*, the last opera in which he was engaged, when Death abruptly terminated his career (like Weber) before he had attained the age of forty, are evidences of his genius. Zampa is a charming work, and is as original as can be expected in these times, when "brass and ass's skin" are permitted to play so distinguished a *rôle*. Halevy has also acquired deserved fame.

Still, I fear, that the middling classes will

long continue to find delight in the detestable music of Herz; and in those plaintive, sentimental, well-known French romances, which, to my mind, are sometimes so ridiculous when uttered by manly lips. Whenever I hear them, I may almost call the sensation I feel one of disgust: this I have experienced very recently at a party in London, at the house of a lady of title whom I will not designate even by initials; she is known for her gracious reception of foreigners. The amusement of the evening was almost entirely confined to music; and, as far as I could judge, to this particular style of music, "Romances."

Amongst the number of foreigners, (so easily distinguished as such in a drawing-room in England,) who by turns seated themselves at the piano to bestow on us their chromatic expressions of the pains and pleasures of love, (the great subject of *Romances Françaises*,) there was one, I regret to say, a compatriot of mine, God bless the man! whose figure, face, and entire appearance were much more allied

to vulgarity than to the tender sentiments he expressed. When he lifted up his goggling eyes to heaven, or rather to the ceiling of the room, and threw a languishing air over the whole of his stupid countenance,—it proved too much for me, and I really felt, ashamed as well as disgusted. But, will it be believed, that, just as I was trying to conquer these emotions, one of the amiable foreigners came up, and addressing him with an air of delight, said, "Ah! sir, this is your own, is it not? Charming! divine!" I could stand no more; I rapidly descended the stairs, and was soon out in the street without saying adieu to any one.

But, to return to my subject. Amongst the public singers of Paris, Nourrit holds without question the first rank; but he also, with his beautiful voice, is obliged, in order to please the pit, which still continues to love exaggeration, to scream, to declaim at the top of his compass. Levasseur possesses a superb organ; but sings without feeling, or the

slightest enthusiasm of manner. At the head of the female singers we must place Mademoiselle Falcon; she is young, and promises to be very great in a few years. Cinti Damoreau has passed forty; (this in France is considered a fault in a woman;) she has quitted the Great Opera for the Feydeau, where she, nightingale as she still is, is associated with a set of owls, all envious of others, all worn out and attenuated as if by consumption.

I scarcely speak of theatrical dancers; their superior merit is so well known and recognised as to admit of no question; — witness Taglioni, who has just re-appeared on the stage after a long absence, as graceful and light as ever.* There are, besides, the Elslers, Alexis Dupont, Fitzjames, and many others; but I see only one male dancer of equal merit with

* The *complaint in her knee*, which has caused such universal regret both in France and England, so as almost to render even the dandies' box at the King's Theatre a desert place, has been cured in so *drole* a manner, that I dare not venture

the females. His name is Mazillier; he has not yet made his appearance on the London boards.

However, there is one thing I have a great pleasure in saying, namely, that I think the pirouette, the most ungraceful imitation of the tee-to-tum, is very near its dethronement upon the Parisian stage; there only remains one individual to perform it. This is well; it is a sign of improved taste and good sense in the French no longer to attach so high a value to the dancing of men upon the stage, particularly in that detestable style which has been so long prevalent. The martial dance may be allowed; the village round may pass; and some others which still exist in reality, and are well represented: but I hope the reader will agree with me in thinking that there is nothing in this world so absurd as to see, in our ballets of the present

to make it known to the reader; I will even recommend him not to inquire into the particulars of Mr. A. D. It is sufficient that she is well again.

day, a man in a short tunic of gauze, with a large toque covered with waving plumes on his head, or else dressed to represent Cupid, with butterfly's wings (made of paper) attached to his shoulders. Look at him erect before you, his thick legs rendered hideously muscular by the violent exercise to which they are daily doomed, whilst he is playing the graceful with his naked arms, appearing by comparison doubly skinny and frightful.

This is already ridiculous enough; but what becomes of the illusion, (if any ever existed,) when this man, after his numerous bounds, capers, pirouettes, &c. at last stops, panting with fatigue, out of breath, and bathed in perspiration; and, nevertheless, throws into his gestures and countenance the tender admiration that he is supposed to feel for the lovely shepherdess who now in her turn begins her exhibition? Ought this not to be put aside for ever? Is it not a thing of bad taste, to which habit alone reconciles us? Why not

leave to women all that is graceful and light? It is their domain, and they ought to fill it exclusively.

Yet there is one dancer whom I cannot comprehend in this species of excommunication; I mean Albert, for so long a time the favourite of the King's Theatre in London. One may still recall with pleasure his pantomimic ballet; his step so measured, his attitudes so easy, and, at the same time, so dignified; his style of dancing so even and graceful! In all his characters, and more particularly in that of *Faust*, he always gave me the idea of a gentleman. *Certes*, this will appear impossible, or at least extraordinary, to certain fine English gentlemen, to whom, indeed, I have before made allusion in my letter on *Roués*, and they will find it difficult to believe that "a vulgar public dancer" could produce such an impression. I should, in reply, tell them, that they themselves are examples of a fact much more difficult to understand; for there are many amongst them

who in their tastes and habits bear a great affinity to the *vaurien*, (good for nothing,) whom Albert represents in this ballet, and yet these persons do not the less continue to be regarded and treated as gentlemen!

CHAPTER VI.

The Fine Arts. — French Artists. — Defect in Colouring. — Horace Vernet. — The Ancient Masters. — Sculpture and Architecture. — The Theatres. — Quadrilles.

NOTWITHSTANDING the diversity of parties, ideas, and opinions which have agitated and still continue to agitate France, and in the midst of all the evil and good that rapidly occur there, it is curious to observe the actual progress that the fine arts have made and are making: painting, music, sculpture, *belles lettres*, architecture, all are learnt, practised, followed with energy and constancy, by thousands of individuals. At the present hour there are not less than from twelve to fifteen hundred artists at Paris who support themselves re-

spectably, many even living quite at their ease; and it is probable that this capital alone furnishes each year as many finished pictures as all the rest of the Continent in the same period of time. The classical or ancient style is quite abandoned; in literature it is the same; the French of to-day have liberated themselves from the rules and models of Greece and Rome.

Contemporary history offers a vast field for the painter, and subjects from it are chosen and executed by artists of the first talent. Such are Horace Vernet, and Paul de la Roche, his son-in-law, who finds his inspiration in the fruitful history of Great Britain. Also Ingrès, the Director of the French Academy at Rome, whom many persons consider as the first living French artist. Then, Conderc, who this year bore the palm for his beautiful Battle of Lawfeldt. Then there is Shneitz, he who has undertaken to represent on canvass the history and bloody recollections of the "*Trois Glorieuses Journées*:" he is clever, but he depicts no-

thing but blood, wounds, naked arms, and ferocious countenances. And then Scheffer, who has given us those touching and heroic pictures of events in the history of modern Greece. And lastly, the veteran Gerard.—Such are the first historical painters, or, to speak the language of the atelier, *les premiers artistes à grande toile*, which France at present possesses.

Amongst those who are designated as painters of the *grand chevalet*, but whose works are of smaller dimensions than the last mentioned, there are Leopold Chabert,* Granet, Beaume, Dévéria, the brothers Johannat, Steuben, Hesse, Bélanger, and Charlet. The two last, if I remember well, are rather considered as painters of cabinet pictures of a more familiar style. As for portrait-painting, it is far less encouraged in France than in England. The artists of the greatest name are Ducaisne and Dubuffe: this latter is well known as the favourite delineator of the English beauties resid-

* He killed himself, two years ago, at Venice; I do not know from what cause.

ing in or visiting Paris; and as he contrives to embellish them even more than nature has done, I am not surprised, nor will be my reader, particularly if it be a lady, that he is very fashionable and much sought after.

There is, as I have said, much genius in the conceptions, and great talent in the execution, of many of these modern artists; but the weak side, the rock upon which painting splits in France, is the want of durability in the colouring. This is a defect which has often forcibly struck me, when, after a few years' interval, I have again seen pictures which at their first issue from the painter's *studio* were brilliant in colour and effect; and I have upon a second view found them so dark, that all the effects of light had disappeared; there was neither air nor space, and every object or figure in the composition seemed as if stuck on the canvass.

This deficiency is very remarkable in almost every picture painted during the time of the empire: the Coronation of Napoleon, by David, had undergone much alteration a very few years

after its completion; and the picture, otherwise clever and well executed, had completely lost its colouring. Even the works of H. Vernet are not entirely free from this drawback. I have heard that he himself avowed that he used too much oil in the working up of his colours, but he added, "It is to get on faster;" and these few words give a good idea of the character of this eminent artist; a rapid conception, and great facility and quickness of execution that nothing can chill, enable him to produce with astonishing promptitude his numberless inspirations. I have often seen him leap down from his scaffolding whilst painting some of his great pictures, and, laughingly seizing hold of his foils, begin to fence, or else, putting on his gloves, commence a boxing-match with any of his friends who might chance to have come into his *atelier*; and then as lightly springing up again to his place in high good-humour, and, rehandling his brush and pallet a minute after having distributed his blows or passes, return to his work with a firm calm

hand, and become entirely absorbed in his occupation !*

One cannot but revert here to that so often debated question,—Whence arises the purity of tint and touch, which still lasts, and has lasted through so many years—centuries even —in the works of the ancient masters ? Was it that in other times the Rubenses, the Vandykes, the Titians, the Correggios, the Guidos, possessed a secret, unknown to modern artists, for the composition of their colours ? Or, was it, as I have lately read somewhere stated of some particular master, that he composed his colours only on bright, clear, shining days ? Did they all adopt this plan ? or perhaps, carrying the same idea even further, and on the principle of philosophical combinations of which we suppose them ignorant, only work in certain colours in certain temperatures and in certain lights ? I am not scientific, nor practical painter

* It is asserted that the cartoons which contain the sketches of all H. Vernet's pictures, exceed in number all those which are in the depôt, (at the Musée I believe,) of the whole of the other French artists.

enough, to know if this be a reasonable supposition, but I think it not an improbable one; and I think it still more probable that great part of their superiority in the art of colouring arose from perhaps a bold unhesitating touch which at once found the hue required, and applied it without going over again and again the same work; for it seems to me that necessarily the addition of one layer of colour over another must produce a want of transparency, and particularly a mixture which perhaps subsequently produces effects unintended by the composer.

May not this be the cause of the want of durability in the colouring of the modern French school of painting? I am unequal to take upon me to decide this point; but I throw out this reflection as it has occurred to me, submitting it to the decision of more competent judges.

There only remains the painters of marine pieces to be spoken of, a style of picture offering to the artists the richest and most inex-

haustible subjects. In this we have Gudin, Isabey, Boulanger, Hersent, &c. The reputation of the first two is European. Sculpture also merits praise, as much from the quality of the pieces that she has produced in France, as from their great number. She may perhaps be reproached, as well as her sister, (Painting,) for her ambitious, exaggerated, even forced positions; still, every day gives birth to new and meritorious productions. The public gardens and squares, the bridges, all are annually more and more embellished by her aid.

The Exchange, the Church of La Madeleine, and the Arch of triumph in the Champs Elysées, exist as bold and incontestable proofs of the actual state of perfection, and of the progress that architecture has made in France. The Madeleine is an immense imitation of some Roman temple; but the Arch of triumph is the finest, the noblest ornament of the capital: size, unity of composition, richness of detail, and grandeur in its whole aspect, all is there! It is a perfect monument, and will exist

for future generations to admire. The four principal groups,—Victory, Resistance, Peace, and War,—are fifty French feet in height; yet they do not look exaggerated, the proportions being so true!

I have already spoken of music; I have only to add, that, in admitting the great foreign masters on our principal stage, we have received an impulse useful to every other lyrical theatre; all have felt the good effect, even to the Vaudeville; and in return, Auber, Herold, and Boyeldieu, have become such excellent musicians, and so highly estimated, as to be applauded even on the stages of Germany and Italy, both sovereigns of the entire musical world.

The theatres are always much frequented in Paris (whilst in London they remain shut during a part of the year); but it must be confessed that the decorations and other accessories go far in encouraging this taste. Now also there are orchestras in the open air: those of Julien and Musard are composed of the

pupils of the *Conservatoire.* The directors gain an immense deal of money, yet a ticket for the enjoyment of these pleasures costs only the modest sum of a franc !

Contredanses or quadrilles—(what a word when treating of the fine arts !)—have made giant steps of late.—Rossini ! Rossini himself composes airs for them !—and now it is not a matter of surprise to have added to the energy of the finest orchestras, whips, dogs, songs, shots ! thunder ! toscins ! red and blue fires—in fact, what is there not ?

The result is, that the best company in Paris frequent these places for the purveying of strong sensations.

CHAPTER VII.

English Girls.— Manœuvring Mothers.— Matrimonial Speculations.— Match-making.— Flirtation.— French Marriages.— England and France.

The reader will perhaps recollect the young English girl that I mentioned, in one of my letters, as walking early in the morning in her father's park. In that picture I tried to describe her amiable simplicity of manners, her touching confidence, and the graceful charm which her innocence and frankness threw over the beauty of her whole person. In the numerous families residing in the provinces of England, there are many and many bright specimens of all these precious qualities: but the medal has its reverse; and the praise, or rather the merited adoration I have offered

to such, is far from being merited by all the English young ladies. Justice compels me to place in contrast a species not at all uncommon, and which but little resembles that I have above alluded to.

I draw my examples more particularly from those families which annually visit the watering-places in England. They arrive there encumbered with so many daughters, that, in order to get rid of a few, the mothers are obliged to seek husbands for them with avidity; and these places offering a choice of various descriptions, greatly induce such mothers to visit them. Whatever may be the pecuniary means that each family possesses, there are always, in addition to the daughters, some two or three brothers to be provided for, to be placed at the bar, in the army, in the navy, &c.; and thus the pittance destined to each girl becomes so small as to be reduced in many cases to almost nothing, and the young lady's hand and *accomplishments* are all the parents have to offer. On the other side, there are in England, as in any other coun-

try, a number of men very amiable and pleasant, who are without a *sou*, either because they have expended all they ever had, or have never possessed anything to expend: these gentlemen also, in quest of the same object, find themselves in the same place, seeking an advantageous matrimonial speculation to retrieve their affairs, or place them in a better position. From this result, intrigues, wherein the curious spectator finds much to amuse.

I regret to be obliged to acknowledge that this desire, this necessity, (for it must be called so,) to get married, eventually destroys all that charm of which I have spoken with such admiration. The manners of these young ladies are as opposite to those before alluded to as can well be imagined; they exhibit an overfree and unnatural gaiety, and a desire to please which passes the legitimate limits, even so far as to make the first advances. Also the general habit of *flirtation* completely does away with all the illusions which their beauty and other advantages might otherwise

produce. In high society, or rather in that which may be better called *fashionable*, but which is not always the best, the same remarks may be applied with almost equal justice; still there are many bright exceptions.

There is another style of woman which I must not forget to mention, who frequent these aforesaid watering-places, and to whom I have an utter repugnance; I mean those who, having passed *la quarantaine*, have taken the mania of match-making. The manœuvring mistakes they make are *impayables*. Others again, (in this purely English,) who speak only of lords, dukes, of Lady C——, of Lady B——, or some right honourable, &c. It is quite impossible to get them to converse on any subject but the nobility, or to look at anything in rank lower than a baronet.

But to return to the letter that I have just cited. The precious advantages which I extolled as existing in a marriage formed under such different auspices, cannot of course be expected in the matrimonial connexions contracted by my watering-place young ladies, nor by their

partners. A man cannot pretend to deceive himself into the belief of an exclusive first, or only attachment, or even of a deeply-felt preference; whatever words he may address to the willing ear now lent to him, have already often been heard by it. The lady cannot conceal this from herself; nor can he, if he be not an egregious coxcomb, believe that he is the first that has made any impression on her heart or imagination.

It is certain that by dint of making love with one man after another, (this, I think, well defines the word *flirtation*,) a young girl must unavoidably lose that reserve of manner, and tarnish that first blush of modesty which is the greatest charm she possesses. When this is lost, who can love her sincerely? Where is the real attachment she inspires. I remember a vaudeville intitled, I think, *Les premières amours*, in which one of the characters is a young Englishwoman of this sort, I suppose, for the couplet says of her and those like her:

* * * *

Elles ont tant de vertu, qu'il en reste
Mème apres les premières amours. (bis.)

These lines explain in a few words my meaning better than many pages could do. I now naturally revert to the very opposite manner in which the bonds of marriage are formed in France; always under the influence, or by the will of parents, and most generally the immediate parties having but a slight personal knowledge one of the other. The advantages of this mode of proceeding are a certainty of security for the past, arising from young unmarried women enjoying so little liberty, and never having the opportunity of making love with any half-dozen men who come in their way, and also hope for the future. And he who puts himself in the ranks of married men feels he has a good chance of inspiring and feeling love from the better knowledge of the good qualities that increasing intimacy may bring out in himself, and in the individual chosen for him. I leave to the reader to form his own opinion on these important matters, without seeking to influence it; and I shall terminate these additional remarks by a few general reflections.

For all that regards material or physical existence, for comforts, and the precautions taken against maladies, particularly *colds*, (the frightful means of engendering that disease so fatal in England — consumption!) for luxury of every description, for the extravagant expenditure of time and money offered to their individual persons, the English distinguish themselves amongst all people, from whatever rank you may choose them; but, on the other hand, they know but little of the real enjoyments of society, the pleasures of complete intimacy, and of mutual good-will, and particularly that smiling good-humour and readiness to enjoy, which distinguish the French people, — they who, notwithstanding the political commotions which are ever shaking their country, the dangers which are continually menacing it, the changes of its dynasty and constitution, nevertheless *go on* constantly and fully enjoying the pleasures of existence!

I would represent England and France, those two great friendly rivals, in two distinct pictures, under the semblance of two female figures:—

The one of great beauty, but with a grave expression and reserved demeanour; in splendid apparel, with feathers in the head, and possessing an eye that haughtily and proudly seems to defy contempt, and *exact* respect rather than court admiration, or inspire love. (The sky of this picture should be cloudy.)

The other should be a graceful, lovely woman; her dress less magnificent, but more finished, more elegant; flowers in the hair; and her smiling lips and eyes should express just the contrary of those of her superb rival. (The sky of this picture should be on one side threatening storms, which the bright beams of the sun are dispersing.)

THE END.

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